

CLASSIC TV SCRIPT:
'THE ODYSSEY OF FLIGHT 33'

ROD SERLING'S THE TWILIGHT ZONE MAGAZINE

AUGUST 1981 / \$2

ORIGINAL STORIES
IN THE TRADITION
OF THE CLASSIC
TELEVISION SERIES

WRITING FOR 'THE TWILIGHT ZONE'

BY 'LOGAN'S RUN' COAUTHOR
GEORGE CLAYTON JOHNSON

HOLLYWOOD CRIES WOLF!

1981'S NEW WEREWOLF FILMS

SHOW-BY-SHOW GUIDE TO TV'S 'TWILIGHT ZONE'

TEN NEW TALES

OF TIME-WARPS
PHANTOM CHILDREN
MONSTROUS INSECTS
AND MESSENGERS
FROM SPACE

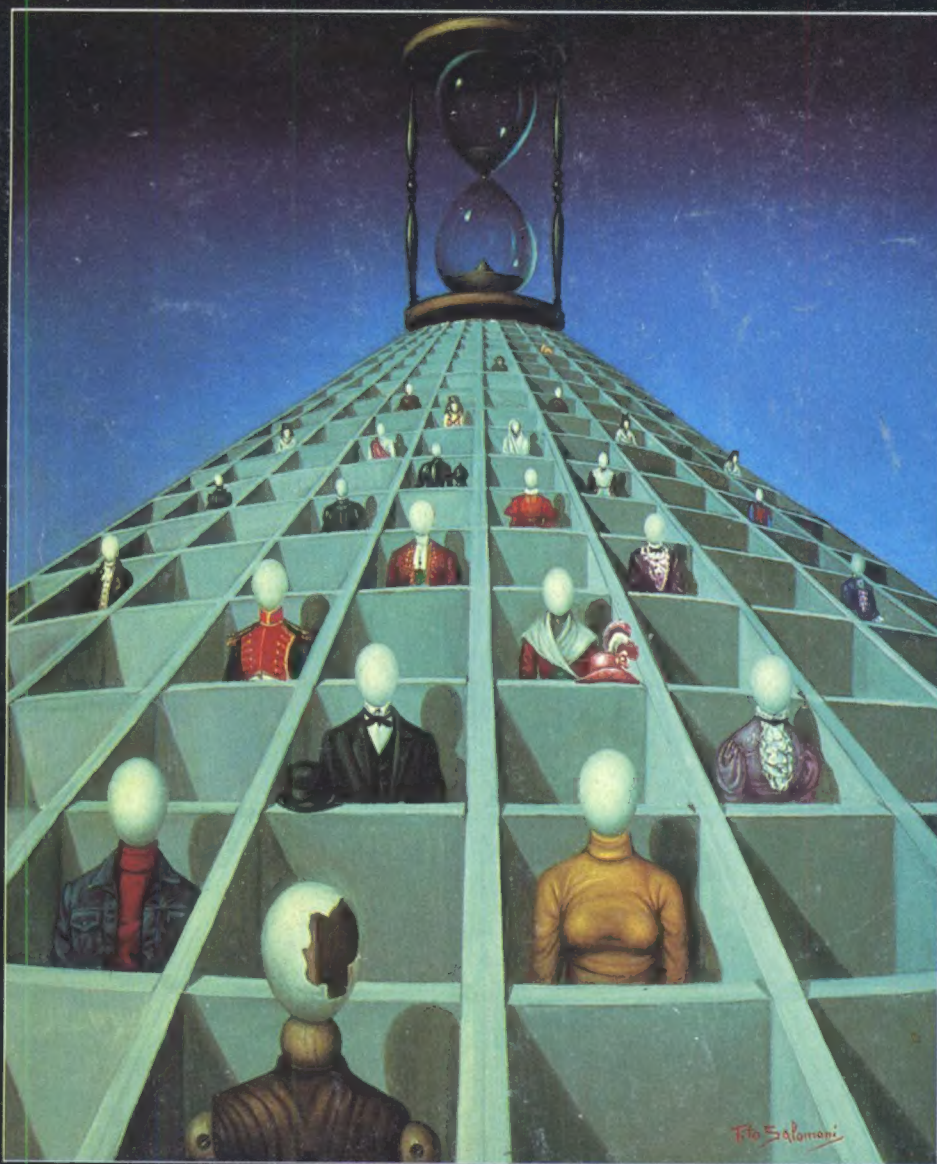
DR. VAN HELSING'S HANDY GUIDE TO GHOST FICTION

FROM 'NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD' TO 'KNIGHTRIDERS'

AN IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW
WITH GEORGE ROMERO

THEODORE STURGEON

ON BOOKS
GAHAN WILSON
ON MOVIES



ROD SERLING'S THE TWILIGHT ZONE MAGAZINE

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Seligson



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Morrell



Tuttle

In an administration which, as one observer has put it, thinks a "wilderness area" is a parking lot without lines, and which has handed over the protection of our natural resources to erstwhile timber lobbyists, strip-mining advocates, and real estate developers, it's useful to be reminded of what horrors the future might hold. In this issue's lead story, *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*, veteran sf writer **REGINALD BRETNOR** paints about as bleak a picture of that future as I've ever seen, a dying world of smoke-gray skies, oil-polluted seas, and arid landscapes devoid of vegetation, all plant life having perished in a man-made plague released by a worshipper of Kali the Destroyer. I'm not sure that Bretnor would enjoy being cast in the role of Cassandra—he's actually quite an accomplished humorist, as his fans can attest—but in *Chariot* he's created a worst-case situation that's instructive, memorable, and deeply moving.

DAVID MORRELL is newer to the game, but has already acquired a considerable reputation worldwide; he made an auspicious debut as a fiction writer with the action novel *First Blood*, which has already been published in thirteen languages and, this year, will be reissued as a Fawcett paperback. It was followed by *Testament* and what he calls "a full-fledged horror novel," *The Totem*, a widely praised variation on the vampire theme. Today he teaches at the University of Iowa and is finishing a new novel.

LISA TUTTLE's short stories are familiar to readers of most of the sf and fantasy magazines. Her first novel, *Windhaven*, written in collaboration with George R. R. Martin, has just been published by Simon and Schuster's Timescape Books, and she herself has just left her native Austin, Texas, to live and write and marry in

England; you'll find her now in "a cottage down in Devon" (which strikes me as a sensible move).

ALASTAIR REID, though born in Scotland, now tends to divide his time between America and Spain; he has taught at Sarah Lawrence, and is Spanish correspondent for *The New Yorker*. Among his published works are poetry collections, children's books, and translations; *The Tale the Hermit Told* has appeared earlier (in a slightly different form) in his *Oddments, Inklings, Omens, Moments*.

PAUL J. NAHIN has also been widely published, articles as well as fiction, in sf magazines and anthologies. An associate professor of electrical and computer engineering at the University of New Hampshire, he is spending the current academic year as a visiting professor on the electronic warfare faculty at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey.

No doubt Dr. Nahin would be well-equipped to tell us the odds of our including, in this same issue, a tale by a fellow Durham resident, **JAMES PATRICK KELLY**; it seems an unlikely coincidence. At the moment, Kelly—who's sold tales to most of the leading sf and fantasy magazines—is living the good life in a solar house and finishing his first novel.

RON WOLFE, feature writer and cartoonist for the *Tulsa Tribune*, once covered the police beat in Oklahoma City—so he obviously knows whereof he speaks in *Tiger of the Mind*. He's just sold a horror novel, *Old Fears*, co-written with John Wooley, and the two are under contract for a second.

As for **LORI ALLEN**, of that fine Shirley Jacksonish sensibility, I don't know *what* to believe. She snared me quite cleverly with a line in her letter—"Before I began writing, I was a hooker"—and then went on to talk about all the rugs she's hooked. She describes herself (and this part's even

more suspicious) as "a middle-aged housewife, just beginning to publish, writing in the time I can steal from my poet husband, our two children, and the rock garden in front of our Connecticut Cape Cod." Read *The Artisan* and make of that what you will.

SAM WILSON, a lifelong resident of Chicago, has sold work to *Mike Shayne Mystery Magazine* and the *Chicago Tribune*; *Midas Night* is his first published fantasy. It's an impressive start, but what Wilson really wants to be is an actor—"along with about six billion other people," he says.

Denver resident **DAVID CURTIS** owns, with his wife, a farm in Tennessee. It was there, he reports, that he had the experiences that formed the basis of *The Man Who Couldn't Remember*. Let's hope that imagination played an equally large part in it!

DOUGLAS JENMAC is a school administrator living in California with his wife, daughter, "and two cats who eat but refuse to work." *Four* was written as a tribute to the *Twilight Zone* tv series more than a year before our magazine appeared; we're pleased to have provided the perfect market for it.

GEORGE CLAYTON JOHNSON's *Writing for 'The Twilight Zone'* is more than just a memoir; it's Johnson's philosophy of writing, the credo of a talented and highly idiosyncratic literary craftsman. Some of the material first appeared, in a different form, in his recent *Outré House* volume of the same name.

TOM SELIGSON, who conducted the interview with George Romero, writes the monthly film column for *Gallery*. He's author of five books, including *To Be Young in Babylon*, a book about the 1960s, and *Stalking*, a psychological thriller that's been sold to the movies. His latest novel, *Doubles*, will be published by Delacorte in 1982.

Answers to last month's quiz

On the July authors' page, names and faces were scrambled; the trick was to match each face with the right name. How many did *you* get right?

Probably a lot more than we did.

Magazines, as you may by now have suspected, are highly imperfect things. And some are more imperfect than others. Thanks to the pressure of work loads and deadlines and limited funds, as well as to sheer stupidity, every issue hits the stands with an inevitable number of typos, misprints, and miscalculations. Sometimes they're errors that only the editors and art staff would notice. Sometimes they're lusus.

This was one of the lusus. We made several last-minute changes in July's issue, including changes in the order of photos and captions on the authors' page. The photos were rearranged as planned; the captions, somehow, were not. (The fault, for once, was entirely the printers'; no one in this office was to blame.) By the time the error came to light, it was too late to correct—for like a show that *Must Go On*, a magazine *Has To Come Out*, mistakes and all. There's nothing to do but apologize in the following issue...which is exactly what we're doing here. Sincere regrets, then, to **John Keefauver**, **Charles L. Grant**, **Stanley Schmidt**, **Jack Ritchie**, **Ron Goulart**, **Carmen C. Carter**, **Joe Lansdale**, **Marc Scott Zicree**, and **Robert Martin**, all of whom, this time, are wearing the faces God gave them.

Robert Silverberg, Georgette Perry, William J. Wilson, and Eileen Roy were lucky; if only through the law of averages, their pictures were identified correctly. (So was Steve Rosse, whose picture we were unable to use.) Not so lucky was Stanley Schmidt, who—again, due to printers' error—suffered the added indignity of a blurb *below* title that only made sense if run above it. ("The battleship, the battle, the commander—surely they were figments of a nightmare. Unless the nightmare itself was just...*Camouflage*.") Fortunately, Stan's an editor himself, and no stranger to disappointment.

But there are two more mistakes to be acknowledged—and completely our fault, this time. The victims were **Robert Bloch** and **Gahan Wilson**, a pair noted for their affability, their good humor, their amused tolerance of



Keefauver



Grant



Schmidt



Ritchie



Goulart



Carter



Lansdale



Zicree



Martin

all gaffes great and small. They're also known for their good sense—which is why readers of the June TZ may have been momentarily puzzled by what were, in fact, transposed paragraphs in Bloch's interview and Wilson's film review. At the end of column 1 on page 14, Bloch was speaking of how, through sheer imagination, he came up with a life-style and persona for his "Norman Bates," the *Psycho* killer modeled on real-life mass murderer Edward Gein. "It wasn't until some years later," he added, "that I ran down some of the facts—and discovered, to my horror, that what I'd invented pretty well corresponded with the details of Gein's actual life." This, and the rest of the paragraph, should logically have followed the discussion of Bates's modus operandi. Likewise, Gahan Wilson's first mention of *Scanners* and its wonderful exploding head ("Blahp, it goes. Phlooie!") should rightly have been followed by his demurral ("The thing is, Brian DePalma did that already in *The Fury*"). Instead, the 'graphs were reversed; and I'm glad, at this late hour, to set the record straight.

—T.K.

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Screen

by Gahan Wilson

The Final Conflict

(Twentieth Century-Fox)
Directed by Graham Baker
Screenplay by Andrew Birkin

In the Greek city of Ephesus, renowned primarily for its temple of Artemis, one of the wonders of the ancient world, it came to pass that, less than a hundred years after the death of Christ—or around a hundred and fifty, depending upon the tradition—a Jewish Christian named John wrote a Book of Revelation in order that he might set down for his tiny flock a vision given him of the destruction of all the evil in this world, and of the salvation of those chosen by God to survive.

In the American city of Hollywood, renowned primarily for its movie studios, among the wonders of this modern world, it came to pass that, in the Year of Our Lord 1976, an Executive Producer named Harvey caused a film to be made from *The Omen*, a screenplay by David Seltzer, in order that the millions might have entertainment and that the shareholders of Twentieth Century-Fox might have millions. And lo, it worked so well that there came to pass a trilogy, for *Omen* begat *Omen II*, and *Omen II* begat *Omen III* (entitled *The Final Conflict*), and the shareholders were well pleased.

The central figure in the series is taken from John's Revelation; and, since these are, after all, horror movies, the figure is not one of the more beneficent beings, such as the Woman Clothed with the Sun and Crowned with Twelve Stars, nor one of the Four and Twenty Elders Clothed in White Raiment; no sir, it is the Antichrist himself, the Beast 666, come to delude us all and, if he can, to destroy the Christian Savior on His second coming. This is by no means your run-of-the-mill villain, this is the chosen son of the Devil himself, the worst that hell can offer on this earth. No wonder they figured that

moviegoers would like to have a peek.

The first of Producer Harvey (Bernhard's) revelations, *The Omen*, got things off to a pretty good start—literally, since it kicked off with a bone-chilling chant to evil sung under the titles (no doubt by a group of defrocked monks). The music—written by Jerry Goldsmith, who won an Oscar for it—is consistently ominous and properly upsetting. You get the feeling that something really *important* is going on here, folks, when you hear those monks begin to belt out Goldsmith's ode; and, throughout the film, the music continues to unnerve.

Seltzer's script is also quite good. We are introduced to a fabulously rich and powerful couple, the Thorns—the fellow played by Gregory Peck, the lady by Lee Remick—and to their little boy, Damien (Harvey Stephens). Now, everything should be just super with the Thorns (what couldn't *we* do if we had that kind of money, right?), but it's not. Mrs. Thorn wears one expensive outfit after another, and Mr. Thorn gets appointed ambassador to Great Britain, no less, and they run through classy servants like Kleenex, but something's wrong with little Damien. And there's also something very odd about little Damien's dog.

Slowly, and with considerable skill, Seltzer's script introduces hints and clues for the Thorns to fret and puzzle over. Eccentric divines of various creeds begin to emerge, all with one ecumenical motivation: each one of these churchly souls has tumbled to the fact that the Beast of the Book of Revelation is among us, and each, by means of the weapons given him by his particular creed, is doing his best to thwart and, hopefully, to kill 666—who (we've figured it out way ahead of Peck, of course; Peck's a great guy and all that, but he *is* a little slow) is none other than little Damien.

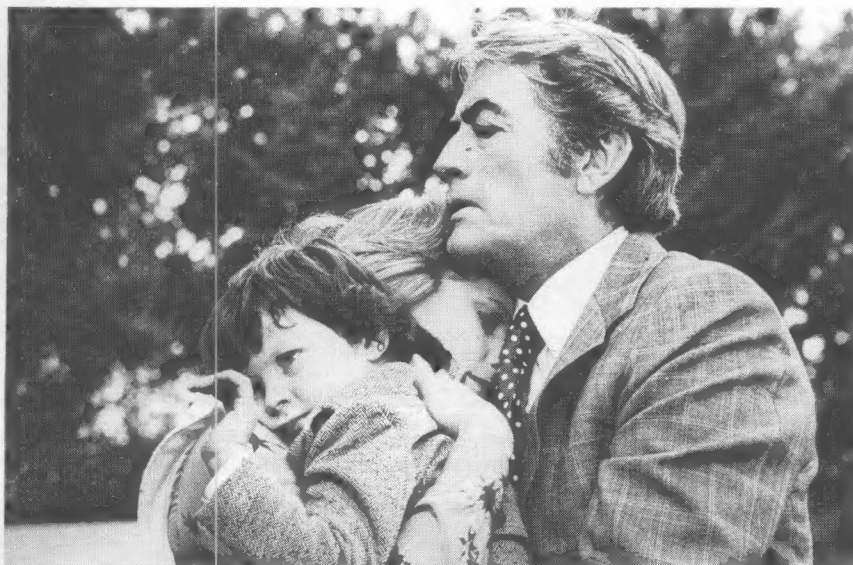
One by one these clerics find their plans seriously interfered with. Worse, they are murdered. Worse, they are *horribly* murdered.

And this brings us to one of the

major charms in the more successful of the *Omens*: namely, the singular brutality of the killings. They are really quite effective. The essential gimmick, or *shtick*, as we say in show biz, is that they all give their victims the old one-two. You don't get hit just once, if you're a Damien target; you get it in the neck *double*. First you're battered about by lightning; then you're impaled upright to the ground. First you're sent hurtling down in an elevator; then, when you've pushed the stop button and think you're safe, the cable snaps and cuts you in two, much to the amusement of the audience in the darkened theater, who clap gleefully and settle back to await the next dreadful double-whammy.

The flaw in *The Omen* is that there is a very heavy feeling of *sets* and *makeup* in it, which is extremely detrimental to the essential mood the film's trying to create: that all of this is really happening, or at least *could* be happening; that the devil is presently walking the earth among the rich and powerful. There is an unfortunate conflict between careful location shooting and back-lot scenery. An awful lot of work is put into dressing the characters authentically and having them move about in realistically chic shops and genuinely imposing mansions—and then you're hit with a plastic horror-face, which is perfectly okay in certain kinds of movies but extremely jarring here. Director Richard Donner's work is, in general, excellent, but this juxtaposition, helter-skelter, of the superrealistic with the superfantastic weakens the impact of the film.

But *The Omen* was decidedly cute and did deserve a sequel—and it got a dandy, with direction by Don Taylor and a script by Stanley Mann and Michael Hodges (inspired by another revelation from Producer Harvey). *Omen II*, otherwise known as *Damien*, is, I do believe, one of the best things of its kind. It offers the most convincing picture of the super-rich that I've ever seen in movies.



"We've figured it out way ahead of Peck: 666 is none other than little Damien." Lee Remick clutches Harvey Stephens, and Gregory Peck clutches them both, in the 1976 film *The Omen*.



"...a really socko sequel." In the 1978 sequel, *Damien*, William Holden seeks vital information from a reluctant museum curator, played by Nicholas Pryor.

This time you don't feel that you're hopping from a sound stage to an actual interior. (Of course, you may well be; but if you don't spot it, it's worked.) The reality of the backgrounds is always consistent, and the actions and activities are *right*. When William Holden, the Thorn now in charge of little Damien, discusses big business with Lew Ayres in a private executive dining room located far above the likes of you and me, there is an extraordinary resonance of power. You just *know* the bastards who run the world talk like that and sit like that and eat like that. And when, on a lark, a bunch of the biggies take the day off and decide to zip around the landscape (which they, of course, own) on

snowmobiles, or have a little private firework display, or enjoy some other such diversion, they do it with an air of insouciance that seems extraordinarily real. There is no doubt in your mind that the Beast 666 is indeed among the rulers of this earth, with the general population at his whim.

The tradition of horrible deaths is continued, perhaps even improved upon. Ayres dies hideously in one of the smoothest bits of action and cutting I've ever seen, struggling under the ice of a frozen lake, *almost* saved (the old one-two), then back under and lost in the swirl of chill water. Then there's the above-mentioned man in the elevator; and you wouldn't believe what happens to William Holden. Great fun!

So, with an okay start and a really socko sequel, I was all ready and waiting for *Omen III*. Whoopie, thought I, this'll be a piperoonie! And I seldom use the expression piperoonie. (I'm not really sure I used it then.)

But it was not to be.

The Final Conflict will remain, I am confident, the last of the *Omens*. Even the Beast 666 could not survive this, not with the aid of all hell's minions, not with the direct intervention of Satan himself. It almost makes you believe in a higher power.

For one thing, and for another thing, and for another after that, Sam Neill, who plays the now-grown-up Damien, bears an uncanny resemblance to an erstwhile governor

of Massachusetts, Michael Dukakis, and I'm afraid my feelings about Dukakis may have slanted me on this movie. I feel it's my duty as a film reviewer to warn you of that. I was out on Cape Cod during a blizzard a year or so ago and Governor Dukakis saw fit to seal me, my wife, my dog, and everybody else out there for days and days. Declared martial law and obviously enjoyed it. Appeared on television wearing a turtleneck sweater (I suppose on account of the blizzard), along with his aides, who were also wearing turtleneck sweaters, giving them the ominous look of leaders wearing uniforms, and lectured all of Massachusetts on how grateful it should be to find itself under his personal supervision. So anybody that looks like Dukakis will, I'm afraid, always suffer from an unfair initial reaction on my part.

As to second reactions: Neill does a perfectly acceptable American accent — and since he is a New Zealander (his first exposure in this country was in the Australian *My Brilliant Career*), this probably took some doing. Also, he does look like he could be an older version of Jonathan Scott-Taylor, the Damien of *Omen II*, who, in turn, looked as though he could be an older version of Harvey Stevens, the Damien of *Omen I*.

Unfortunately, far from calling to mind an evil being of immense resource and supernatural ability, Neill reminded me of an insecure young lawyer who is wearing a stuffed shirt in order to conceal his inadequacies. At no point did I feel he could blast my soul.

Of course the material he has to work with is pretty fierce: a script by Andrew Birkin which gives the poor devil — no pun intended, but I'll let it stand — lines which might have defeated Olivier in his prime. He hands Neill pompous little speeches which no one could roll out convincingly, the sort of set pieces which are delivered as the rest of the cast stands and gazes awestruck at his eloquence.

Another aspect of the script which destroys any kind of spookiness is the team of comic priests, under the leadership of Rossano Brazzi, who are perhaps the most feckless ghost-hunters since Abbott and Costello. Which, come to think of it, makes me think the *Omens* may not have come to an end, after all. How about *Omen IV Meets Richard Pryor*?



"...an uncanny resemblance to an erstwhile governor of Massachusetts." Sam Neill takes over the Damien Thorn role in *The Final Conflict*, with Barnaby Holm as a boy who comes under his evil influence.



"A team of comic priests..." Rossano Brazzi blesses a set of ancient daggers capable of killing the Antichrist.



"...another revelation from Producer Harvey." Sam Neill and co-star Lisa Harrow join Harvey Bernhard on the *Final Conflict* set.

Books

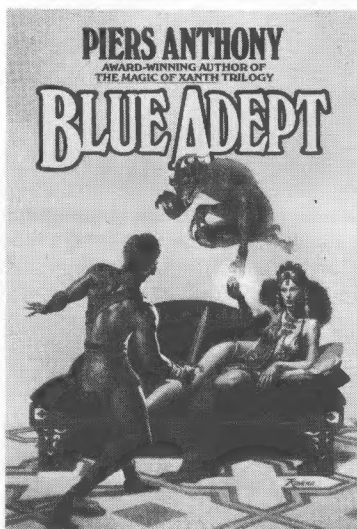
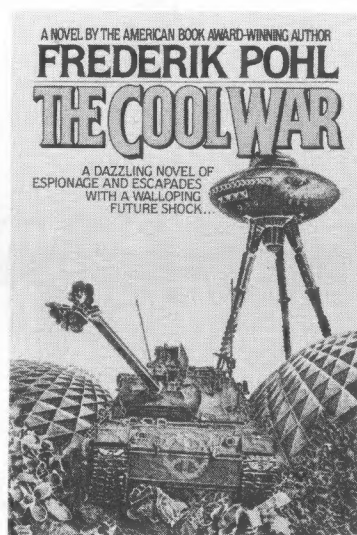
by Theodore Sturgeon

I have had such joy, fascination, provocation, and deep-down interest in this month's reading that I can hardly contain myself, and even the outlet this column provides is not release enough. Last month, in discussing the amazing *Techno/Peasant's Survival Manual* from Bantam, I told you about the line that put bubbles in my blood: "The ultimate computer will be grown in a Petri dish and will be interfaced with the brain." Such a device would at last make it possible for all of you to get behind my eyes and share with me the excitement of such adventures and discoveries at the moment they come to me. (Of course, the gadget must have an on-off switch!)

Well: to the books.

Fred Pohl has done it again. **The Cool War** (Ballantine, \$10.95) is as deft a tumble into the near future as can be found anywhere. Pohl's placement of story elements is masterly; he knows what the market wants, what he wants, and what you want. So we have chase, suspense, surprise, characters, and a fine climax. We have spies, intrigue, lovers, and villains; and, as always with Pohl, something to say. That is clearly the part that *he* wants. What he has to say is essentially what he has been trying to tell us since he and Cyril Kornbluth wrote *Gravy Planet*: if we give our politics and technology enough rope, they will hang us all.

He tells us this in the arresting adventures of a Unitarian minister of the near future (a dreary and polluted future it is, too) who's unexpectedly, and against his will, drafted into something which claims it is not the CIA. This takes him into a series of adventures so wild that at times one can barely suspend one's disbelief; but one hangs on because it becomes so necessary to learn how it all turns out. Pohl's choice of the Unitarian is perfect as the container for his deeper meanings, for the man, though as



physically resourceful and resilient as anyone Heinlein ever gave us, is a moral klutz. He is desperately anxious to do the right thing at all times, but has fearful difficulty distinguishing between right and wrong. His confusion is magnified by his naiveté; he's never altogether sure whom to believe. And the underlying answer to

this dilemma of right-and-wrong is, rather terrifyingly, that there is no real way of knowing which is which.

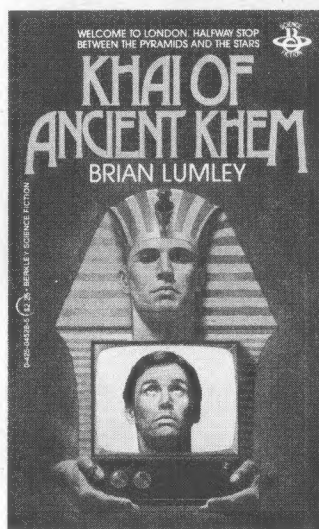
Piers Anthony wrote a book called *Split Infinity*, which I have not read. My encounter now with its sequel (or part two of a trilogy, if you like) is a little easier to take than my experiences with other books that have put me in the same predicament, for Anthony feeds in the background so skillfully that, except for one or two references, the reader can comfortably follow the flow without the feeling that he's missed anything vital to this particular narrative. This phase of the triptych is called **Blue Adept** (Ballantine, \$10.95) and deals with a planet divided by a "curtain." On one side, science works and magic doesn't. On the other side, magic works and science doesn't. Our hero, Stile, is involved in the dangerous pursuit of a murderer on the magic side, and the necessity for participation in a sort of Olympic Games on the science side. There is a hidden antagonist on both sides; the revelation of who that might be, and why, and the ultimate confrontations, are swift, exciting, and most original. I point you especially to that portion of the Game contest involving music, which contains one of the most profound discussions of the nature of music, and of performance, that I have read anywhere. I'll state it bluntly: though I've always admired Piers Anthony's competence, I never realized before how serious, how penetrating, his thought could be.

With **Magic Time** (Berkley, \$2.25), Kit Reed slides into the top ranks. Do you remember a picture called *Westworld*, which had its moments, and its sequel, *Futureworld*, which laid a chrome-plated egg? It's a pity they weren't done with the rich imagination and swift action developed here. The basic idea is the same—a sort of Disneyland of the future, where

the (high) paying customers can act out their fantasies. From there on, in quantity and quality, similarities cease. You'll like the people, especially the jaundiced protagonist, a "holo" producer hired by a wealthy egomaniac to immortalize him on film; the saintly little East Indian superscientist who becomes love-struck by an ugly girl; and the girl herself, Luce, tough and vulnerable and gutsy as all git-out.

Now we come to a genuine original. Jon Manchip White's **Death by Dreaming** (Apple-Wood, \$10.95) derives from nothing in this world but the author's head; if there's another book remotely like it, I'm unaware of it. Its narrator is a testy director named Robert who's involved with the theater and occasionally the cinema; his wife and friend operate a sleep laboratory in upstate New York. Most reluctantly Robert answers a frantic call from the clinic and drives up to it in a snowstorm. He's angry at being dragged there, angry at the fact that his wife has stayed there when he wanted her with him, angry that his current production hasn't been going well. He is, however, the only one who can help with a truly terrible emergency (which I'll let White tell you about; it's part of my religion not to blow another writer's plot), and to do this he must sleep and dream; he must dream what is described as "the central and controlling dream of a person's life." And believe you me, it can get pretty hairy in there. As the narrative proceeds, with flashbacks of Robert's biography and that of his wife, dream and reality meld and separate, fuse and withdraw, until, by White's skillful design, you don't know from time to time which is which. The story builds to a terrifying climax and a puzzling denouement, though I hasten to say that it's the kind of puzzle you don't mind carrying away with you.

White's style is interesting. His narrator is arrogant and often detestable, and the author makes no excuses for him. It's nice to see this done on purpose, for it's not always easy to do. Further, White departs from the convention of white-spacing (no pun intended). White-spacing comes from the conviction among editors, particularly magazine editors, that a whole page of solid typography without paragraphing will drive readers away. Editors will carry this



so far that they will often triple-space in the middle of a scene and start the next paragraph with a great big capital letter, quite confusing the reader, who thinks he's being carried to another time and place. (And all too often anthologists and the editors of collections will numbly pick up this stupidity in a reprint.) Jon White and his editors are not afraid to fly in the face of this ritual, and will give you pages and pages of solid copy, even in dialogue, so that it comes out like this: "The woman asked, 'I suppose it wouldn't be possible for us to have another word with Dr. Harkiss?' The nurse shook her head. 'I'm sorry, Mrs. Martinson. The doctor is very busy this evening.' She glanced sideways at me. Her voice was sweet and precise. 'You're quite sure?' asked the woman. 'Yes, quite sure, Mrs. Martinson. A difficult case. . .'" And so on.

Added to this, the narrative style is rather like that of the early 1900s; yet the style is consonant with the character and the situation, and I found it a refreshing change. And speaking of typography, the book has an interesting typographical trick to separate chapters. I won't attempt to duplicate it here, because there's no profit in irritating this magazine's typesetters, but watch for it; it does more than a little to dovetail dream and reality. All in all, a highly unusual book.

Briefly noted:

Khai of Ancient Khem by Brian Lumley (Berkley, \$2.25): Stranger arrives in London with two ancient rings; guys in museum put them on; *whoosh*, they're in ancient Egypt or something like it; boy becomes king, spaceship picks up evil Pharaoh's city and drops it. Much explicit sex, some amusing, some disgusting, some bloody and violent; battles, gore, and *whoosh!* here we are in London again.

Doc Savage is back with novels #103 and #104, **The Whiskers of Hercules** and **The Man Who Was Scared**, by, of course, Kenneth Robeson (Bantam, \$1.95). Lord, how I loved these things when I was in high school!

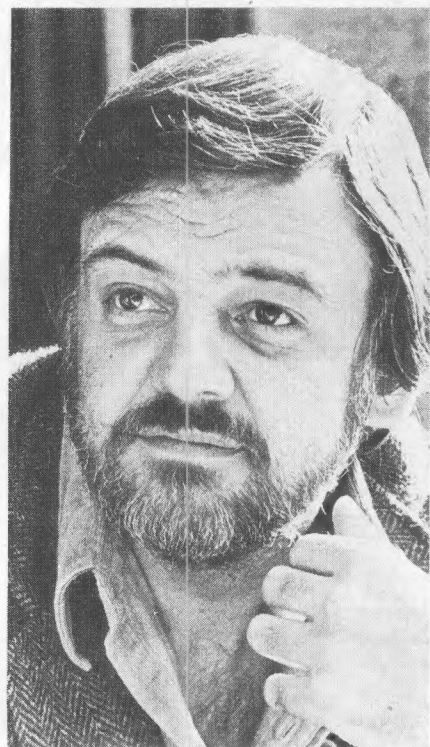
Death's Angel by Kathleen Sky (Bantam, \$2.25) is an authorized original *Star Trek* novel with a tough female as the protagonist who goes all sophomore-soft when she gets next to Captain Kirk. I want Ms. Sky to get on with her big one, a huge forthcoming novel in which she gives us the history of the Jews for the next five hundred years.

The Entity by Frank de Felitta (Warner Books, \$2.75), who wrote *Audrey Rose*, is about a woman who gets raped a lot by a demon lover that's ultimately uncovered by a blast of liquid helium—all in the tradition of Stephen King.

And to end on an upbeat: **Nebula Winners Fifteen** (Harper & Row, \$12.95) is edited this time by Frank Herbert, and very well, too. Along with his intro and rubrics, there are some very fine stories here, naturally; the Science Fiction Writers of America gave them all the highest award they could. And a bonus: articles by Ben Bova and Vonda McIntire, both excellent, the latter invaluable to anyone writing 'sf, but particularly to the beginner. Be well! 17

George Romero:

Revealing the monsters within us



T Z I N T E R V I E W

Interviewer **Tom Seligson** reports:

With his first film, *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), director George Romero made a spectacular debut. Shot for a mere seventy thousand dollars with a cast of Pittsburgh unknowns, the film did for zombies what *Jaws* later did for sharks. It soon became a horror cult classic, grossed over ten million dollars, and introduced Romero as a master of the horror genre.

Many young directors would have caught the next plane to Hollywood, but Romero is a maverick. Remaining in Pittsburgh and worried about being typed as a horror director, he followed up *Night* with *It's Always Vanilla* (1970) and *Jack's Wife* (1971), two films that were not widely distributed and did little for his career. Still, he kept working, churning out commercials, sports specials for television, and a politically oriented sf feature called *The Crazies* (1972).

It was his return to the horror genre in *Martin* (1977) that drew renewed critical attention to this staunchly independent filmmaker whom *Newsweek* hailed as "a dazzling stylist" whose "balance of wit and horror is the best since Hitchcock." Then came *Dawn of the Dead* (1979), a sequel to *Night*, which *Rolling Stone* picked as the number-one film of the year and which has grossed fifty-five million dollars to date.

Romero's latest film, *Knightriders*, is about modern-day knights who joust on motorcycles, and what it

lacks in horror it makes up for in spectacle. Future films include the film version of Stephen King's *The Stand*; *Creepshow*, based on King's first original screenplay; and *Day of the Dead*, the third film in Romero's zombie trilogy.

Romero is forty-one, married to the actress Christine Forrest (who has appeared in most of his films), and continues to live in Pittsburgh. He's a hulking man whose size would frighten you on a deserted street—that is, until you saw his face. With his gray-flecked beard, soft blue eyes, and dimples, this master of horror couldn't scare a pussycat.

TZ: You've been making movies ever since you were young. Were you always interested in horror films?

Romero: I loved all genre films—horror movies as well as war pictures and cowboy films. Whenever one was at a neighborhood theater or on television, I'd watch it. That's the way I learned how they worked. However, it was just circumstance, the fact that *Night of the Living Dead* was my first picture, that I got a reputation as a director of horror films. I chose the genre because I liked it, and because I wanted to do something commercial.

TZ: *Night of the Living Dead* has come to be considered a classic independent film. How did you make it for so little money?

Romero: First of all, it was based on a short story that I wrote. I didn't

have to buy the rights. Then a friend of mine and I collaborated on the screenplay. The production was also very simple. At the time, I had a small film company going. We were doing commercials primarily, but we had all the hardware and a crew of people, and that's what we used to make the film. Plus we used a lot of friends in the cast—even some of the advertising people we were working with in Pittsburgh. They came out to play the zombies. There was a great deal of local cooperation, because we were the first feature film based out of Pittsburgh.

TZ: Were the actors professional?

Romero: Three or four of them were. But as professional as you can get as an actor in Pittsburgh means doing radio or television. Primarily the cast was friends and people who showed up.

TZ: I've heard you were unable to get a major studio to distribute the film. Why do you think you had so much trouble?

Romero: Well, for one thing, I really didn't know what I was doing. After I made the film, I literally threw it in the trunk of the car and brought it to New York. The first studio I called was Columbia, and I was surprised when they told me to come on in with the film. They held it for three months. They kept saying, "It's great" and "We're thinking about it." But finally they turned it down, because the film was in black and white, and it was



"You can kill the monster, but your next-door neighbor may become him tomorrow." The action begins in *Night of the Living Dead* with an attack in a lonely cemetery.

hard to get drive-ins to play black and white pictures.

The next studio I went to was AIP. They said, "Change the ending, and you've got a deal."

TZ: How did they want it changed?

Romero: They didn't want the hero to die. But I refused to do it. It would have changed what the picture was about. By this time, five months had gone by, and I decided to forget the major studios and get my own sales rep. Finally the Walter Reed-Continental chain made an offer, and I took it.

TZ: Were you surprised when *Night of the Living Dead* became such a success on the midnight cult circuit?

Romero: Very much—although that was in its second wave. The film was an immediate hit on the drive-in circuit. That's what a lot of people don't realize. It made a lot of money right away. In fact, the only money that it ever returned to us was during that first nine months. After that, the film sort of dropped out of existence for about a year and a half. Then Walter Reed released it on a double bill with a film called *Slaves*. Rex Reed and some of the other critics wrote that it was better than *Slaves*. Then the Elgin and the Waverly and a couple of other theaters started to play it at midnight. It began to get international press, and that really surprised me. I knew that it was a good horror film, but by this point, all I could see in it were the flaws, the things I wished I could go back and correct.

TZ: Despite your own dissatisfaction, the film's success was certainly important to your career.

Romero: Yes and no. I was able to raise the money right away to make more movies. But in retrospect, I think it happened too quickly. Though I did have ideas for other films, I had no idea what the business was about. I

was just a guy making beer commercials in Pittsburgh.

TZ: I've read that you were reluctant to do another horror picture right away, for fear you'd be typed as a horror director.

Romero: That's true. So what did I do? I went and made two films that probably six people saw—*It's Always Vanilla* and *Jack's Wife*. I learned a lot from them in terms of developing as a filmmaker, but what they really taught me was the nature of the film business. I learned that the film industry is not going to accept serious little dramas from some upstart in Pittsburgh—especially if the films have no stars. As they say in the biz, there's no bottom-side protection. Those two films taught me what the odds were against that kind of small personal film. I still don't think those films are bad, I just think they were the wrong kind of film to make at that stage in my career.

TZ: Is that why you returned to the horror genre?

Romero: No, because I didn't—at least not right away. After those two films, I got involved with a small independent New York distributor, Cambist, and I made *The Crazies*. It's a disaster film about a bio-weapons spill. This film didn't hit, either, but in this case the problem was not with the film, but with the handling. When the distributor saw the rough cut, he thought he had *Jaws* on his hands. Consequently he tried to open it too big, and he spent a lot of money just opening in New York. It was a lot of money for him, but it wasn't enough to compete with the big studios. He ended up having to shelve the film.

TZ: Tell me more about the film itself.

Romero: It was inspired by the science fiction disaster films of the 1950s. It's about a plane that crashes, spilling a substance designed for germ warfare. Nobody knows exactly what's going on. People are being affected by the germ, but they don't know it. All they know is that the army has come into town and is trying to herd them all together. The soldiers are just as confused as the townspeople. There are only a few officials in the Pentagon who know what actually happened, and what results is a conflict between the townspeople and the military forces.

TZ: It sounds very political.

Romero: It is. It was made just

around the time of Kent State. You remember how angry people were about the shootings on the campus by the National Guard. Ultimately, I think, the film deals with the politics a little too lightly. It has sort of an outrageous, bawdy style, and some people may have thought we were making fun of politics, exploiting Vietnam and the Kent State tragedy. We weren't at all. In fact, *The Crazies* was a very angry and radical film, if one sees through the comic surface.

TZ: Who are the Crazies in the title? The soldiers or the townspeople?

Romero: The people. Once they come in contact with the bug, they go crazy. However, there's a scientist brought in to handle the situation who observes that you can't tell who's crazy and who's not.

TZ: It sounds to some extent like what happens in *Night of the Living Dead*, in which the people who are alive get killed and almost immediately turn into zombies.

Romero: That's because I was dealing with the same idea in both movies—how easily the victim becomes the monster. For instance, in *Night of the Living Dead*, take those scenes with the little girl. Her mother's trying to protect her, but then the girl dies, and seconds later she's a zombie, going after her mother. What I'm trying to show is how the monster, the evil, is not something lurking in the distance, but something actually inside all of us.

That's what Stephen King shows so well. He takes a real situation, a very mundane situation, and throws it just two degrees out of whack. It's like *Village of the Damned*, where those delightful little children are really the evil ones. That's a very scary thing. It's like meeting an insane person on the street.

TZ: Talking about what constitutes horror, the next big feature you did was *Martin*. I remember the *Newsweek* review, which said, "Romero poses the question of whether the hero, Martin, is in fact an eighty-four-year-old vampire from Transylvania or an eighteen-year-old psychotic from Pittsburgh." Is that how you saw the movie?

Romero: In a way. *Martin* is designed to show that all those supernatural monsters that are part of our literary tradition are, in essence, expurgations of ourselves. They are beasts we've created in order to exor-

cise the monster from within us. Whether it's a monster made out of spare parts, one that grows out of us, or something we turn into during a full moon, monsters have traditionally been considered embodiments of our own evil. By distinguishing them from us, we could destroy them. I tried to show in *Martin* that you can't just slice off this evil part of ourselves and throw it away. It's a permanent part of us, and we'd better try to understand it.

TZ: Are you saying that we're all innately evil?

Romero: "Potentially evil" is a better way of putting it. I don't think there's an intrinsically evil side to man. But I think all of us at certain times in our lives do things that are compromising, things that go against our conscience. There's a line we won't cross, and for all of us it's a question of "Where is that line?" Sometimes we stretch it a bit. No matter who we are, and how much we're satisfied with our own behavior, there are always those moments we feel guilty about. That's the guilt we're trying to unload by creating monsters. We can then punish ourselves by punishing the monster, allowing our good side to prevail. In *Martin*, by showing an eighteen-year-old psychotic kid who on one hand is himself and on the other hand is this monster, I'm showing that the monster can never die. It's like in *Night of the Living Dead*. You can kill the monster, but your next-door neighbor may become him tomorrow.

TZ: In real life, who would you be more afraid to run into on a dark Pittsburgh street—the vampire or the young psychotic?

Romero: Probably the psychotic, because he looks normal, but a second later he could change. That's precisely the point I'm trying to make. Traditionally, whenever we see vampires in the movies, we've come to expect a certain predictable behavior. For example, we all know that vampires are only going to frighten us at night, and that to get rid of them, all we have to do is find their casket and put a stake through their heart. What I'm trying to show in *Martin* is that we can't expect the monster to be predictable. That's also what Steve's saying in his books.

TZ: One of the things I found most interesting about *Martin*, and which lends itself to what you're saying, is

the fact that he uses razors against his victims, rather than fangs. I think that makes him much more horrifying.

Romero: Visually it's certainly more horrifying. It also makes him more mysterious. Fangs don't come out just when he feels the need, and the need is not connected to the moon or the night. However, on the other hand, Martin's got a very detailed and meticulous M.O. He uses syringes and razor blades. He has a little kit with breaking and entering tools, and he knows about things like burglar



"The need is not connected to the moon or the night." John Amplas displays a tool of his trade in *Martin*.



"... what America is becoming." In Romero's *Dawn of the Dead*, mobs of well-dressed zombies at a shopping mall bear a disturbing resemblance to ordinary bargain-hunters.

alarms, and electric garage-door openers, which is one of those supposedly fail-safe devices, but which he uses to get into the one house he attacks. That's another level of *Martin*. It's saying that the very things we take comfort in and feel safe because we have, like garage-door openers, are in fact not going to save us.

TZ: In the case of *Martin*, did you have the different levels of the film thought out in advance, or did they just develop?

Romero: I planned it all in advance. I always do that. It's a self-preservation technique. Knowing what this business is like, I don't like to sit down and do a final script and get all excited and emotionally involved with it until I know for sure there's a deal. And thanks to the talents of my partner, I've been in the luxurious position of making all of our deals on the basis of treatments and story ideas. Consequently, all of the films I've made come from ideas that I've had for a

year or more. I have little index files with story-line ideas, and I work on them a lot. But it's not until I know the film's definitely going to be made that I actually sit down and write the final script. I think it's important to be in touch with the story at the time you're doing it. I would hate to take out one of my old scripts that's been sitting in the drawer and film it without being able to rework it.

TZ: As a novelist, I know that when you're in the process of writing scenes that are particularly horrifying, they can sometimes have a chilling effect. Does the same thing happen to you as a director? Or because it's a group enterprise, with so many people around, does that diminish the thrill?

Romero: It happens when you're cutting the film. It's four in the morning, you're all alone working on a scene, and you finish it, shut off the lights, and play it for yourself. Those are the times one of your own scenes may frighten you. It's happened to me



"... borrowing from Cornel Wilde and the great American bike movie." Morgan, the Black Knight, played by Tom Savini, has eyes for a pretty bike mechanic played by Christine Forrest (offscreen, George Romero's wife) in *Knightriders*.



Brother Blue plays Merlin, the *Knightriders*' spiritual advisor.

three or four times. It happened with *Night of the Living Dead*, with a couple of scenes in *Martin*, and with the knitting needle scene in *The Crazies*. It's a scene with a little old lady—again, it's one of those things that are two degrees off-whack. She's sitting in a rocking chair, knitting. A soldier walks in to take her to safety, and she lays into him with her knitting needle. That scene really got to me the first time I saw it.

TZ: What about when you rescreen one of your movies? Does it still have an effect on you, or have you seen it too often?

Romero: I make a habit of laying off my films for long periods of time, and then taking a fresh look. After it was first made, I laid off *Night of the Living Dead* for three years. Even when I would be speaking about it somewhere, I wouldn't sit in while it was being shown. That's because all I could see were the problems. Right now, I haven't seen the film for four years.

Even when you're making the film, it's sometimes hard to tell whether it's working. In that respect, filmmaking is different from writing. I know that when I write a script, I can lay off it

for a few days and then go back and get a sense of how it's reading. A film is different when you're working on it, because you see it over and over. You see how the images cut against each other, and you know exactly what's coming. You really need time away from it before you can let it affect your senses with any degree of freshness.

The impact of film is basically visceral—and that's particularly so with horror, as well as comedy. Whenever you're trying to evoke a spontaneous reaction, like a laugh, a cry, or a startle, it's a very delicate process. You don't know if it's working, because you yourself never get to experience it for the first time. It's really instrument flying. You're banking on understanding intellectually that if you connect this sound with this image, then you'll get a rise out of the audience.

TZ: But you don't really know until you show it to people?

Romero: That's right. And sometimes it's a very rude awakening. The first time you have it in front of forty people. If everyone sits there and the suspense or horror doesn't hit them, you know it's not working. You can just feel it.

TZ: Do you make a point of seeing the films of other horror directors?

Romero: Sure. I go to see everyone else's work. I like John Carpenter a lot. He's really very skilled at frightening you, and I think *Halloween* is beautiful. I also think David Cronenberg does a good job. I like both *The Brood* and *Scanners*. Another favorite director of mine is Roman Polanski. I thought *Repulsion* was incredible, especially the scene with the mirror. Catherine Deneuve opens a door that has a mirror on it, and as the door is moving, there's maybe a frame or two where you see,

in the mirror, a figure standing behind her. There's not even a sound, but it's a real heart-stopper. The film itself is beautifully crafted. It tightens all your nerve endings and makes you ready for something horrifying.

Alien did that, too. *Alien* is an example of how a film can create tension regardless of its story. If you really think about it, we've seen that kind of plot before. What gives the film its tension is the sight of those empty halls, plus the steam and the noise, all of which has a very visceral impact. It wasn't the jumps that were particularly effective.

TZ: What do you mean by jumps?

Romero: Jumps are when you manipulate the audience into literally jumping in their seats. Anybody can do them. You can make an audience jump with ninety minutes of black leader in which, at random intervals, you've put a white frame synchronized with a loud noise. That'll make them jump. Of course, it's not the same thing as really putting the audience on edge and holding them there.

TZ: What do you think of the many cheapie horror pictures that have recently come out? Films like *Terror Train* and *Maniac* and *Motel Hell*?

Romero: A lot of these films are made simply because there's a wave going on. They're being made in Buffalo, North Carolina, everywhere. That happens anytime there's a trend that's within the reach of small independent filmmakers. I don't think many of them are any good. They don't have much integrity, or even an affection for the genre. They're just deals.

Motel Hell was one of the more interesting of the bunch. It was actually very funny. Rory Calhoun plays this innkeeper-butcher who turns his guests into pork sausage. It was intended to be a send-up of horror pictures. The problem was they tried to play it both ways, as horror and comedy.

TZ: Is that possible to do?

Romero: It's hard, but I think there's room for it. If you watch a fifties horror movie now, you'll laugh all the way through—even at *The Thing*. It's hilarious. I tried to play it both ways with *Dawn of the Dead*.

TZ: I can see that. A lot of critics have commented on how the film is more than just a horror film; because it takes place in a shopping mall, it's

also seen as a satire on American consumerism. Was that your intention from the start?

Romero: *Dawn of the Dead* is the second part of an intended trilogy, all of which is based on my original short story. In the story, everything occurs in the farmhouse. Different groups of people show up at different times. When I started to make *Dawn*, I decided to change that. The phenomenon of the zombies is continuing—it's expanding, in fact—so I decided that I didn't want to keep it at the same location. I also wanted to change the texture of the sequel, to make it bawdier. I once said *Night of the Living Dead* was a fifties film made in the sixties. Well, *Dawn* is a sixties film made in the seventies. And maybe the third one will be a seventies film made in the eighties.

In *Dawn of the Dead*, I wanted a surface texture that would provide for small confined spaces while also reflecting on what America is becoming—a sterile, fast-food society. At first I wasn't sure how to convey that idea. But I happen to know the people who own the mall. I was out there one day taking a tour of it, and suddenly I realized that I had to do it there. I sat down and wrote an original treatment, played with it a bit, and finally did the script. By then we had a deal to do the film, and so I was able to write it with the mall in mind.

TZ: I gather the owners gave you complete cooperation.

Romero: Totally. And so did the individual merchants. The only ones we had some difficulty with were the chains, and that's only because they had to get approval from headquarters.

TZ: Has that mall become famous as a result of the film? Is there a plaque out front—or better yet, a statue of a zombie?

Romero: I'm afraid not! But I'll tell you this, the film certainly hasn't hurt business any. Not that anything could.

TZ: Where do you go in the third part of the trilogy? I've heard it's called *Day of the Dead*.

Romero: That's just a working title. I don't know what we'll eventually call it. As far as the story is concerned, the film deals with a time when the zombies appear to have become the new society. But then we begin to wonder: If there aren't any more people, how are they eating? Then we

find out that, in fact, there are more people, and that the zombies are being fed—something I alluded to in *Dawn of the Dead*. Finally we come to realize that their food supply is being farmed. The story progresses from there. I don't want to say much more than that.

TZ: That's intriguing enough! When's the film going to be made?

Romero: Contractually we don't have to do it for five years. I wanted some time in between. Maybe it's an ego thing, but I feel really gratified that the two films have become as well known as they are. I also like the idea that they reflect two different eras in terms of when they were made. I would really like it if the third film in the series could reflect still another period. I admit that it might be very indulgent and egotistical to wait like this, but I'm going to do it anyway.

TZ: This brings me to your latest picture, *Knightriders*, which is not a horror picture. How did you come to make it?

Romero: Several years ago I was in a meeting with Sam Arkoff, who was the head of AIP. I told him that I wanted to do a spaghetti King Arthur movie, set in the period. I wanted to show the knights the way they really were: infected and syphilitic and so forth. Sam said, "No, you'd be killing a legend. Also, no one wants to see that medieval stuff now." So I said, sort of facetiously, "Well, how about putting the knights on motorcycles and using rock and roll?" Sam said, "That's not a bad idea. You may have something there."

I thought about it several weeks later, and subsequently went back in to see the studios with a concept that was very close to what *Knightriders* is now. But they always read it as a kind of *Death Race 2000* or a bike picture. I think that, until they actually saw it, even the distributors of the film and the people who financed the production thought of it more as a bike film than what it is—namely, a film of modern-day knights trying to live out the King Arthur legend.

TZ: What interested you about the King Arthur legend in the first place?

Romero: Again, it was old genre movies. I'd give my eyeteeth to make an *Ivanhoe*. In *Knightriders*, I'm borrowing from two different genres. I'm borrowing from all those 'Cornel Wilde, Robert Taylor movies. And I'm

also borrowing from the great American bike movie.

Basically, it's a film about idealism. It's about a group of people who are trying to live their own life-style completely separate and apart from the rest of society. They are all members of a traveling Renaissance fair. They travel from town to town, holding jousting tournaments on motorcycles. Instead of searching for the Holy Grail, their quest is to keep themselves uncorrupted, despite the media's attempt to commercialize them.

TZ: *Knightriders*, of course, is not the only current picture about medieval legend. There's *Excalibur*, which is set in the period, and *Dragonslayer*, a sword and sorcery picture, and several others not yet in production. Why this sudden interest in the medieval era? Are we reaching back to something more glamorous?

Romero: Definitely. I think there's a longing for romance again. We've been trying to create a kind of romance out of things that aren't romantic, and I think we're finally realizing it. We haven't had romance in our music for a hell of a long time—not since the Beatles. There's also a longing for a certain kind of morality again, a personal sense of honor and conscience. That's what *Knightriders* is about—about people trying to live by their own simple code, independent of the rest of society.

TZ: I know that the budget on this picture was about four million dollars, which is roughly three times what *Dawn* cost. Was directing the picture a more anxious experience because the stakes were so much higher?

Romero: Yes, to some extent. However, for the first time, we weren't the gambler. It was all outside financing, so it wasn't our money. Still, I treated it as though it was. All that money is on the screen. We didn't take big fees or anything. We were very economical. I think that if a studio budgeted this script, they would have budgeted it at around twelve million dollars. We had a cast of sixty under union regulations. We used a hundred bikes and twelve of the best stunt men from Stunts Unlimited to do the action sequences.

TZ: Were the stunts especially challenging to direct because of the risks involved?

Romero: For sure. I had my heart



Romero on the *Knightriders* set with producer Richard Rubinstein (center) and Stephen King, who's written the screenplay for Romero's next film, *Creepshow*. Says Romero: "I know we're going to have a ball."

stopped a few times. But these guys were real pros. Gary Davis was the stunt coordinator, and his riders are the greatest in the world. The only injuries were minor, football-type injuries. Nobody was seriously hurt.

Knightriders is, in fact, a more delicate film than the ones I've done in the past. It has a very delicate balance between the action sequences and the characters' dramatic scenes. There's a lot of action in the film, but there's also a lot of meat, and it was difficult integrating the two. That was the real challenge.

TZ: In all of your films, you seem to have developed an ensemble of largely unknown actors. Some people have referred to it as a kind of family. Do you want to continue working with a group of this sort?

Romero: I'd love to. However, one of my next films, *Creepshow*, is going to have some names in it, because it's the kind of film that needs that sort of treatment. It's an anthology, with five separate stories—and with so much going on, you need to know a character the moment he's on the screen. In that situation, I have no objection to casting stars. What I object to is casting a name simply for the sake of the name... though my partner says, facetiously, that I shouldn't hold it against someone just because he has a name.

TZ: Despite the outside financing you used for *Knightriders*, you've still managed to maintain your independence of the studios, just as you have throughout your career. Is there anything that would get you to work for a major studio?

Romero: I'm the first one on the plane whenever they want to talk. I have not resisted that in any way, shape, or form. I know people at all

the major studios, and I'm always in conversation with them. My problem up until now is that the only thing I've ever been offered, or the only thing I've ever shown them that they were willing to consider, have been two-, three-, or four-million-dollar horror films.

The other problem with working for a studio is that I'd lose control. With a studio involved, the film is no longer mine—and yet it's my neck that's still on the line. I'm gambling that, in the long run, I'm better off working independently. My films will succeed or fail the same way, but at least they'll be *my* films.

TZ: What's your next film going to be?

Romero: *Creepshow*. It's written by Stephen King, and it's the first original script of his that's going to be filmed. It'll be a much bigger picture than I've done before, with a budget of between seven and eight million.

TZ: Aren't you also going to be doing the film of King's *The Stand*?

Romero: Yes. Steve's already written the second draft of the screenplay, but we haven't presented it to anyone. This is a project that definitely needs studio financing. It'll be a huge production, somewhere between fifteen and twenty million dollars. However, we still want to maintain as much control as possible. We intend to package it ourselves, including the cast, and not even pitch it until we're ready to roll. Steve and I have agreed that if we can't get a deal we like, one that allows us maximum control, then we're not interested in doing it. We'll wait until we get what we want.

TZ: You two are certainly an ideal combination. How'd you get together?

Romero: I've been a fan of his forever. And I was one of the people

Warner Brothers approached with *'Salem's Lot*. I immediately said yes, because I loved the property, and the conditions they were talking about seemed right. They said, "Take this book, go talk to Steve, and we don't want to see you until the movie's done. Just do it quickly." I went to Maine, and Steve and I hit it off right away. However, I never ended up making the film, because Warner Brothers got scared. They saw a lot of other vampire movies being made, and so they decided to make *'Salem's Lot* for television.

TZ: I know that a great number of people, all your respective fans, are eagerly awaiting the films you'll do together.

Romero: I hope so. I know we're going to have a ball with *Creepshow*. We start shooting in July, and we plan to have it ready for release by spring of 1982.

TZ: Aside from King, are there any other horror and suspense writers whose work you admire?

Romero: I like Richard Matheson a lot, and Peter Straub, and also Ira Levin. And I enjoy the gothic writers, like Bram Stoker.

TZ: Is it true that you're writing a novel yourself?

Romero: Yes. It's about the supernatural. Right now I'm planning it just as a novel, but if I like it enough, I'll probably turn it into a movie.

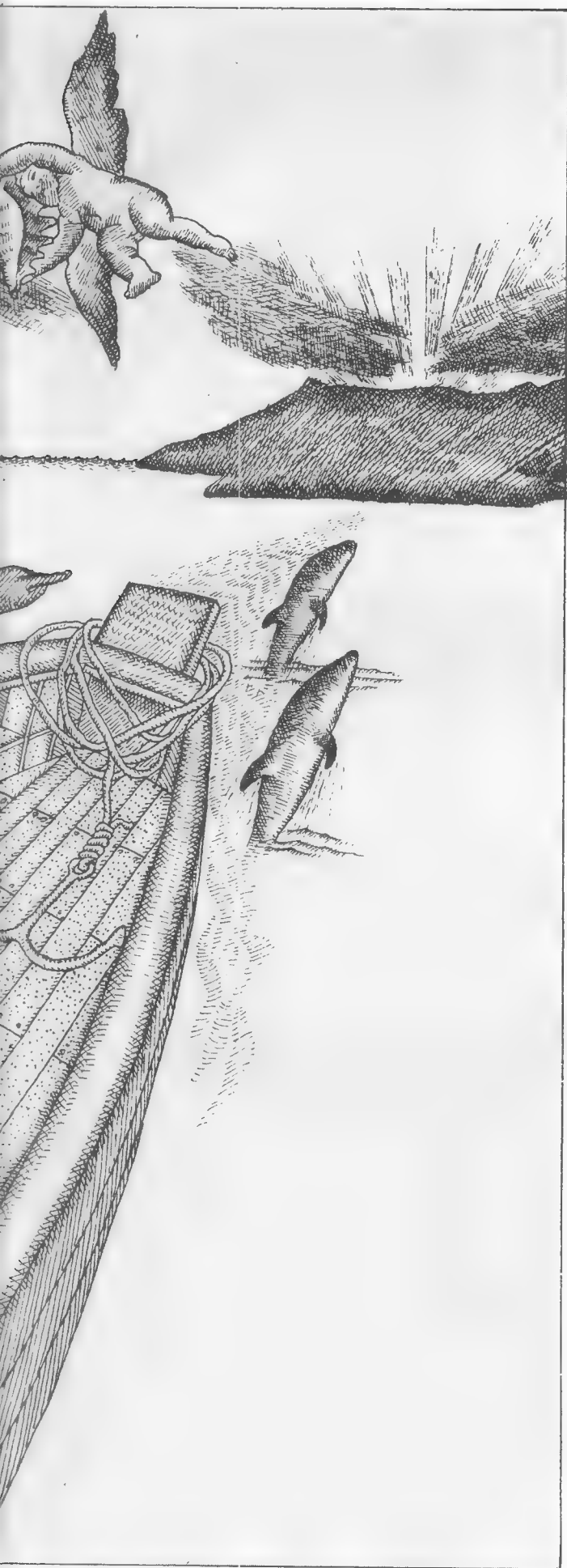
TZ: As a leading practitioner of the genre, do you think the horror film will always be with us? Or will we reach a point where we become so jaded that nothing new can jolt us?

Romero: I think there are always going to be new ideas in the hopper. Who would have thought, before *Jaws*, that a shark would end up frightening everyone? When the critics speak today of the horror genre reaching a saturation point, what they're really talking about are the bad films. People are getting tired of the schlock. But there'll always be room for good, well-made films, in any genre.

TZ: One last question, and it doesn't have to do with films or books. Is there anything that scares George Romero?

Romero: Yes—the atomic bomb. Also, random violence, like what happened to John Lennon. That's what frightens me the most: real threats. I'm not scared of shadows. **17**





Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

by Reginald Bretnor

THE REMNANTS OF HUMANITY
HAD EXPECTED A MESSENGER
FROM HEAVEN.
BUT NOT EVERYONE EXPECTED
THE MESSAGE HE BROUGHT.

Through the shattered windows of his wheelhouse, Annesley—Captain Annesley—looked out over the murdered world, at the dead, clotted basin of its sky, which even the enraged sun could no longer quite pierce, at the sullen swells of its leaden sea, at his ship's cracked and peeling paint, and at the strangely mixed survivors he had gathered at the Reverend Jonathan's request to bring before the Messenger at Tua Reva.

Of all his commands over the long years, this ship was by far the smallest. She had started life on the coast of Kyushu as a hundred-foot diesel-powered sampan. First commerce and then war had washed her back and forth between the islands of the South



Pacific, from owner to new owner, from port to port—much as Annesley had himself been washed. Finally, crewed only by a dead man in her engine room, she had drifted within sight of Tua Reva, and Annesley had put out in an outrigger canoe with four or five more or less able-bodied members of the Reverend's flock and brought her in to beach her, make her as shipshape as he could, and put her back in the little business that remained: the unpaid, hopeless business of helping the condemned, the nearly dead, survive, going from island to island scavenging for forgotten canned goods and dried foods which, because they were already dead, had not been ruined by the pandemic that warmakers had let loose against all green and growing things. He had jury-rigged her as a schooner and filled her tanks from what oil was left in a Russian submarine wrecked on Tua Reva's reef—oil so precious that he had used it only once, to make certain that the ancient engine could still be coaxed to run. Her teak wheel was almost bare of varnish; her teak binnacle, much more than a century old, had seen service on a Swedish square-rigger. Only the shadow of her most recent name—*Waltzing Matilda, Suva*—was still visible. For all that, she was a good sea-boat, and Annesley

would have enjoyed her had the world still lived.

He was aware of his ship, his passengers, the course he steered, as a good captain must always be aware, but his mind kept coming back to what had happened to the world: the mighty forests of the Siberian *taiga* and of Canada, all dead; the once-living jungles of the Amazon, of India and Burma and Ceylon, dead and rotted; the honeysuckled lanes he remembered as a boy, all, all dead; every green leaf along every coast he had ever sailed, each palm on every atoll, each fern. In all the world, not a single plant still lived to do its work of sweetening the air, converting carbon dioxide into life-giving oxygen.

As a boy, Annesley had run across something similar in a science fiction novel—and had found it utterly unbelievable. Now the Russo-Indian Alliance had made it real. One Hindu biochemist had been responsible, knowing exactly what he did. He'd simply happened to be a Kali-worshiper, totally obsessed, a fact which his own government had been unaware of, or else ignored, and which their Russian allies would have scoffed at. When at last they had found out, he'd died a terrible death—triumphantly, knowing his work had pleased the dreadful Goddess of Destruction.

The plants had died, the insects, the animals and birds, and men had died with them, preying on each other for a while, and on each other's leavings. And the war would have ended then, had it not been for the Vengeance, that final, ghastly orgasm of fear and hatred that had expended every remaining superweapon in a final festival for Kali.

It had taken three years for the plants to die; a little longer for their dried or rotted roots and rootlets to release their hold on the soils and sands that they, and they alone, had held together since life on the world began. Then gales and whirlwinds had torn the dust from the bare ribs of earth; rains had silted lovely clear rivers and estuaries, fouling the lakes, starting to foul the seas. It had taken a while longer for the lives that had depended on the plants and on the soil to perish. Now only the sea still lived, and the scattered handfuls of surviving men close enough to the sea to find subsistence in it. For still the fishes swam; dolphins and whales surfaced to suck the putrid air; somehow a few sea birds still flew.

And now, over the sullen, leaden sea, the sun glared down, a ragged, tarnished smear of angry heat, no longer tranquil as it once had been, its torn corona roiled and threatening. To Annesley, that had been the most frightening thing of all, for no act of man could have caused that turmoil. He could not, of course, believe the Polynesian explanation, whispered between old men and trembling aged women, that La, the Sun God, out of all patience with mankind, would now complete the world's destruction. He could not believe it, but still it frightened him.

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Nor could he believe the news that, three weeks before, the Messengers had come. Word of their arrival had spread with too strange a swiftness. Radio communication was almost as dead now as the earth itself. Something had happened to the Heavyside Layer; those satellites which had not been vaporized were now inert; anything but line-of-sight transmission was much too rare to be depended on. Yet word of *their* arrival somehow reached every corner of the world, very much as news had traveled across the broad Pacific in the ancient days of the sailing gods.

Everyone *knew* the Messengers had come down out of the over-sky, out of space itself, to save the wretched remnants of mankind, to bear them away out of death, destruction, and despair to a new life on a new and kindly world. Reverend Jonathan Aho had been one of the first to hear, and he had sent an excited boy to Annesley to summon him to his small once-white New England church on the now-bare hill behind Tua Reva's town. Aho had come out to greet him, his broad Hawaiian face radiant with a joy Annesley could not remember having seen since childhood, when he had looked upon his grandfather standing on a Cornish headland entranced by the majestic freshness of the sunlit sea after a spring storm.

"*They* are coming, Andrew Annesley!" he'd cried, embracing him. "My friend, they are on their way—here, here to Tua Reva. We must gather everyone, everyone we can reach. We, all who remain—we are the chosen! Take your ship. Find them! Nagasawa will go with you, and the Tahitian, and the Finnish sailor—he's now well enough. We have eight days only, perhaps ten. That is what *they* say, the Lord's Messengers. They will be here, wait-

ing, when you return."

"Has anybody seen them?" Annesley had asked. "What do they look like, Jonathan?"

"They look like men. The word is—well, it is said that they *glow*. It is a miracle! Everyone describes them differently. I have heard of a Norwegian who says they are blue-eyed with blond hair, of Chinese and Japanese who speak of their black eyes and golden skins."

"How have you heard these things?" Annesley had asked.

"Sometimes the radio speaks of them. Sometimes the old ones who claim second sight. Sometimes—well, sometimes the messages just come and no one knows from where. But Andrew, Andrew! They are all agreed! So will you start at once?"

"Of course," Annesley had said, not having the heart to tell him that despairing men invent myths to cling to; and Reverend Jonathan had told him to go with God.

Annesley had picked up perhaps ninety people—he had kept no exact count—most of them natives, Polynesians or part-Polynesians. The rest were war's flotsam and jetsam, as he himself had been. They crowded the foredeck, sitting, squatting, peering out over the rail, eager for a first glimpse of Tua Reva, still beyond the blurred horizon. There were two aged Belgian nuns, ragged, wrinkled, still making valiant efforts to preserve their once-starched coifs; there was a turbaned Sikh with an ailing wife and starving child whom Annesley had never seen before—the waves must only very lately have washed them up; there was a beachcomber named Gonsalvez, of unknown origin and ancestry, who had been loved by the natives of his island because of his crazy cheerfulness, his mad dancing. Annesley recognized almost all of them, and now he marveled how they all, each one, had already heard about the Messengers, so that no explanations had been necessary. There had been no dissension among them, no impoliteness. He had watched the expressions on their faces, running the gamut from tremulous hope to exaltation. Most of them sat in little groups, talking in subdued, excited voices; some sang or chanted softly, softly, then fell silent to search the sea ahead of them once more. Annesley pitied them.

At the second largest island in the group, they had taken aboard a young black Mormon missionary and his three proselytes, a middle-aged woman and two young men. The missionary's name was Orville Jimson, a solid, shy, wholly dedicated man. His face, like all their faces, was drawn, but it was radiant now. As the ship's boat brought them alongside, and as he and the others climbed aboard, Annesley heard him singing to himself:



"Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home.
Sing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home—"

He broke off when he saw Annesley's expression. He smiled. "Sort of surprised you, Captain? I guess you didn't expect a black man to be singing that old song, now did you?"

Annesley shook his head, smiling back at him.

"Most people wouldn't. Most people think it's just a slave song. But it's not. My grandmother used to sing it when I was just a tad, and it was she who told me. It's a hymn of promise, a hymn of freedom, a hymn of joy! It always has been. And when they sang it, those who *believed*—well, they knew it was a prophesy, the prophesy that's coming true today!"

He led his people forward, found a place next to the two old nuns; and Annesley could see that he was singing to them, too, in his deep, resonant, pleasant voice, and that they were listening. And as

the hours went by, and *Waltzing Matilda's* grunting, clanking engine put the sea-miles behind them—he knew it would be thought strange if he saved oil now—the old hymn kept echoing in his mind.

*I looked over Jordan, and what did I see,
Comin' for to carry me home?
A band of angels comin' after me,
Comin' for to carry me home.*

The sea was a following sea, and *Waltzing Matilda* wallowed sluggishly, a slow, hypnotic movement. Once in a while, porpoises would surface to either side, breathe reluctantly, and take refuge in the still-clean water; they followed the vessel, but they no longer played.

Annesley's mind began to wander among his memories. He remembered his first sea voyage, on a small, long-obsolete steamer commanded by the uncle after whom he had been named, carrying freight and trippers out to the Hebrides, a summer voyage, a fine-weather voyage; he and his sisters playing on the deck; standing beside the Scottish helmsman, his small hand on the wheel. He recalled the stories his father and grandfather and uncles used to tell, stories of Arctic ice and of the Red Sea's heat, of ships that vanished with all hands, of whales and sea monsters and the *Flying Dutchman*. He remembered the first Atlantic storm to try his mettle, and his pride when he had won his master's ticket and his first command.

Ship after ship sailed again in his memory, and he wondered what had become of them—as though he didn't know, as though any of them could possibly have survived the war. Only vessels as inconsiderable as *Waltzing Matilda* had managed that: probably a few dhows along the Straits of Hormuz or on the Indian Ocean's many coasts, fishing boats here and there, perhaps a lumbering tug or two. The ships Annesley had commanded in his youth had been proud ships: new motorships carrying freight and high-pay passengers; one or two cruise ships, most of whose idle people he could not help regarding with contempt; huge automated container ships. They had all been his.

*Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home.
Swing low, sweet chariot . . .*

Aboard the loveliest of all those ships, Annesley had brought his bride on their honeymoon, acquainting her with the moonlit Caribbean, with the sweet, warm smell of winds blowing from the shore, with the wonderful, mysterious green flash at sunset on St. Vincent. She had not wanted to stay at home when he was at sea; nor had he wanted her to stay. He recalled those rare occasions when she and their two boys had come to sea with him . . . Then he remembered how the war had killed them almost at its start, had killed all three, and how in his dark de-

It was Annesley who saw it first—a sudden glint, a broad flash of light against the background of the hills. He thrust the glasses back at Jimson. "Good God Almighty!" he whispered. "What is it? Can this all be true?"

spair he had been grateful for his orders, cutting his brief leave short, sending him out on a submarine-infested ocean in midwinter, grateful for a shipmaster's isolation, grateful for the shrieking wind, the crashing seas, for the sea's anger and its challenge. The sea, he thought, had been all that he had left, the sea with its calms and tempests, its unknown depths, its living creatures, its strength. And now the sea was all that the whole world had left, this dead world which, in dying, had inevitably doomed the sea.

Swing low, sweet chariot . . .

The hours passed, and suddenly, on the horizon, Tua Reva reared its low, jagged hills. Annesley didn't even notice it until he saw Orville Jimson standing, pointing, and all the people round him turning their heads, craning necks, calling to one another excitedly, as though until that moment they hadn't really believed in its existence, in the island of their promise, their salvation.

*I looked over Jordan, and what did I see,
Comin' for to carry me home . . .*

He knew what they were thinking—that soon, soon they would see it, the vessel of the Messengers, that band of angels who had come to save them all and bear them off to a glorious, green, still-living world; and he recognized the simplicity, the essential innocence that now united them, transcending all differences of doctrine, culture, ancestry. He had caught glimpses of it once or twice before, in lifeboats, but only momentarily; and never, never had it been so complete. He knew that they were trying to imagine the world to which they thought they would be taken and the beings who would take them there—a world untouched by war, beings untainted by hatred and destruction. A band of angels? Well, why not? Beings willing to cross the gulf between the stars to rescue others would certainly have left the insanities that had shattered earth and humankind far, far behind them in their history—if, indeed, they had ever suffered from them. He didn't think it would much matter whether they were called angels, or spacemen, or simply people. Nor would they care.

So, aware of hopes and dreams he could not share, Annesley steered *Waltzing Matilda* toward Tua Reva, now rising from the sea, now a dark, rough silhouette against the awful sky, now—and abruptly—an island eighteen miles long. Orville Jimson knocked on the wheelhouse door, and Annesley shouted at him to come in.

"It won't be long now," he said.

"The Lord be praised!" answered Jimson. "It cannot be too soon! Captain—Captain, do you think we'll be able to see their—their—"

"Their chariot?" remarked Annesley gently. "We can if it swings low enough. Here . . ." He handed over his battered Japanese binoculars. "Do you want to watch for it, Orville?"

Jimson took them eagerly, thanking him, and hurried to the window coaming, leaning both his elbows on it. Annesley turned the wheel over to the Finnish sailor and joined him. Hopefully, prayerfully, Jimson hummed the old hymn. For a time they took turns watching, saying nothing.

It was Annesley who saw it first—a sudden glint, a broad flash of light against the background of the hills that swept back steeply from the harbor and the town. He thrust the glasses back at Jimson. "Good God Almighty!" he whispered. "What is it? Can this all be true? . . . What do you make of it?" he asked, trying to keep his voice level. "It's too big to be anything that belongs there!"

Jimson peered, his hands trembling. "It's the Messengers! Captain, it's *got* to be! May I—may I take these—" He gestured with the glasses. "May I take these down on deck so—so all the rest can see?"

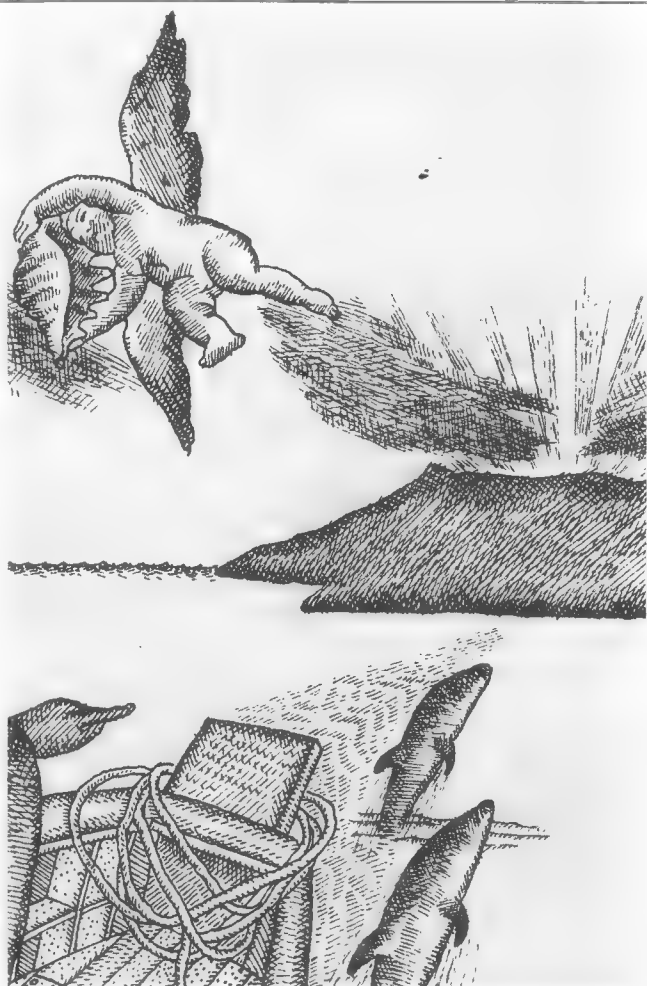
Annesley struggled against shock; he tried to quench the hope that surged within him. He forced himself to smile. "Go ahead," he said. "Just don't let anybody drop them overboard."

He stayed at the window, watching Jimson and the other passengers, so eager, so joyful, and still so polite; there was no pushing, no arguing over who was next. And all the while *Waltzing Matilda* brought Tua Reva closer, closer, until even with his naked eye Annesley could see that the reflected light came from an object separate and distinct, an object he now could place a short distance from the church, an object thrice as big as the church itself.

Jimson brought the binoculars back to him. "Look, look, Captain! The size of it! And—and it's simply floating, just floating in the air!"

"Thanks, Orville," Annesley replied, handing the glasses back, afraid to look. "I'll—I'll see it soon enough. Some of your people there have poor eyes, the older ones especially. They need these worse than you or I. Pass them around till we're in hailing distance of the reef."

As he watched, the outlines of the great, shining shape grew clearer and more definite, and half a



mile off the reef he could see that it was indeed floating in the air, perhaps ten feet off the ground. He marveled at the distances it must have traveled, and wondered what technology had built it, what sort of crew it had, what sort of captain. He looked down at his own hard, square hands and saw that they were trembling.

The passage through the reef now dead ahead, he took the wheel back from the Finn, thankful that there was this one more job of piloting to do. *Waltzing Matilda* passed unerringly through the rough water of the passage into Tua Reva's once-blue lagoon.

Reverend Jonathan was waiting for them on the jetty with ten or twelve of his parishioners. Calling out their greetings, they helped the Finn and the Tahitian make fast bow and stern lines and run down the ship's makeshift gangplank. From their church, half a mile beyond the little town and across its graveyard, a bell was pealing happily, excitedly, one crazy rhythm breaking off only to start another. It had been the ship's bell of a World War I commerce raider, sunk in shallow water. Its deep bronze voice sang the contrast between its own strength and what had been done to Tua Reva—for now, where once there had been multitudes of flowers and flowering shrubs and flowering trees, where once in the evening tall palms had brocaded the sunset sky, there was only dust and death and dryness, the dust of Tua Reva's hills, wind-driven or made into mud rivers by the rain.

Annesley's passengers noticed none of this. All their attention was focused on the huge, shining vehicle awaiting them, so raply that many had to be taken by the hand or arm and led ashore.

Jonathan came aboard and stood with Annesley. His own countenance transfigured, he looked at Annesley's and saw that he, too, was envisioning the miraculous fulfillment of the promise—for now Annesley, in the turmoil of his mind, found that the dreams he had not shared had suddenly become his own, fashioning a world out of his memories, his newborn hopes, out of all he had lost and wept for.

Would it be a world of majestic mountains, stately forests, ferocious jungles; of wild coastlines, of warm tradewinds, of mighty rivers emptying into clean, clear harbors? Would it—could it—even be a world holding such havens as the Cornwall of his boyhood, the sweet Devon of his home and marriage?

It could. It would. It had to be.

Swing low, sweet chariot,

Comin' for to carry me home . . .

Annesley did not realize that he had said the words aloud until he felt Jonathan's hand on his elbow.

"Andrew, Andrew!" Jonathan said. "That song—that is exactly what is happening. I have spoken with the Messenger, and it is just as the reports all said. When I first saw him, it was as though I was looking at myself, not as I am, but as I ought to be. You shall see him too, for he is waiting for us in the church. We are all going there, and I shall hold a service, a very short one because we have so little time—a service of rejoicing. The Messenger has told me what is going to happen. The sun is sick, Andrew." His voice rose in his excitement; his English became, momentarily, the pidgin of his childhood. "Sun sick now. Pretty soon swell up, burn everything! Earth burn up! Seas boil!"

Annesley scarcely heard him, so caught up was he in the wonder of it all. Quickly, quietly, the people went ashore; Orville Jimson, leading the two nuns and the small family of Sikhs, was the last to leave the ship; and still Annesley did not stir.

Jonathan touched his shoulder. "Come, Andrew. We go to church now."

They, too, went ashore, and the procession waited for them to pass and lead the way along the town's dusty street and through the graveyard, to crowd with all the folk of Tua Reva into the little church. They were no longer quiet; they laughed and sang; eyes suddenly bright, they stopped and kissed each other and walked on. Gonsalvez, the crazy beachcomber, capered with them, dancing in and out, laughing like a happy child.

At the church door, Jonathan drew Annesley aside to let the people pass. Then they, too, went in. As they walked down the aisle, Annesley saw that

"The Messenger has told me
what is going to happen."

His English became,
momentarily, the pidgin of
his childhood. "Sun sick
now. Pretty soon swell up,
burn everything! Earth
burn up! Seas boil!"

the shabby altar was adorned as it had not been for years. There were vases on it, filled with a glorious miracle of fresh, living flowers.

"The Messenger brought them to us," whispered Reverend Jonathan, seating him in a front pew next to Orville Jimson and the nuns. "They are from our world."

Annesley looked up. The Messenger was standing by the altar, and somehow he was difficult to see. He seemed to be surrounded by an aura, a radiance; and Annesley saw that he was a man of middle height, like he himself, that he stood broad and straight, that he had sandy hair and dark gray eyes like Annesley's. It was as though he looked upon the promise of a new Andrew Annesley, expectantly and joyously.

Jonathan lifted his hand, and there was silence. His smile was an illumination in the church.

"Let us sing!" he said. "Let us sing the Lord's praises and His glory. Let us sing our thankfulness for His Messengers!"

Orville Jimson suddenly was on his feet. "Reverend, may I—?"

Jonathan raised assenting hands, and instantly Jimson's rich voice sounded forth, triumphant.

"Swing low, sweet chariot,

Comin' for to carry me home.

Swing low, sweet chariot,

Comin' for to carry me home."

His voice swelled, richer still.

"I looked over Jordan, and what did I see,

Comin' for to carry me home?

A band of angels comin' after me,

Comin' for to carry me home!"

Reverend Jonathan opened his arms to include everyone in the church. Everyone stood. Once more the hymn sounded forth, Polynesian voices, voices from far continents, the voices of people who scarcely understood the words they sang, all dominated by Jimson's voice. And Annesley sang with them.

Jonathan gestured to them all to sit. He took his Bible from the altar. "We—" he began, his voice breaking, then strengthening. "We have been chosen. In this dead world, killed by our fellow men, a world which now, for all time, will be purged by fire, we

have been given life. Let us all pray that we are worthy of the gift. We are being given an unspoiled world. My brothers, my sisters, we are blessed! We are witnessing the fulfillment of the prophesy, the vision of St. John the Divine, when he was shown the Last Days and the Judgment." Jonathan's voice trembled. "Listen! This is what he said in the First Verse of the Twenty-First Chapter of the Book of Revelation. *Listen!*

*"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth;
for the first heaven and the first earth
were passed away; and there was no more sea."*

"We are witnessing the passing of the old heaven and the old earth, we few here, and our few brothers and sisters being gathered by the Messengers throughout the world. And we shall possess the new heaven and the new earth, even as John foresaw, and everything shall be as he has written it, and there shall be no more sea!"

Abruptly, Annesley understood the words. He half rose. "Jonathan," he exclaimed, "what did you say?"

"I spoke St. John's words, Andrew," Jonathan told him gently. *"There shall be no more sea."*

Annesley's mind had been seeing its own visions; now, in an instant, they shattered into nothingness.

"No!" he cried aloud, involuntarily, the word torn from his throat. He pointed at the Messenger. "Is—is that true?"

Slowly the Messenger, that strange other Annesley, inclined his head.

For a moment, everything seemed to stop. Then Annesley was on his feet. *"No God could be so cruel!"* he cried, and turned and blundered past the nuns, and shook off Orville Jimson's soothing hand, and half-ran, half-staggered down the aisle, his eyes filled with the salt tears that are man's heritage from the salt sea. Nobody tried to stop him, and he did not look back until after he was once more aboard his ship.

Presently, from the shattered windows of his wheelhouse, Annesley—Captain Annesley—watched those chosen people leave the church. He watched them as they walked up the graveyard path to the space vessel's gleaming boarding ramp. He watched until the last of them—the two nuns, and Orville Jimson, and Reverend Jonathan—had gone in with the Messenger. He saw the ramp silently retracted, and saw the ship's wall seal. He watched the vessel rise, slowly at first, then faster, faster, until it vanished in the muck of the sky. He thought of the exploding sun, the boiling sea, the whales and porpoises.

Then, before casting off, Annesley went below and started *Waltzing Matilda's* ancient engine for the last time.

Swing low, sweet chariot . . . 17



Tiger of the Mind

by Ron Wolfe

YOU CAN'T SEE IT, BUT IT CAN SEE YOU . . . AND IT'S HUNGRY.

A gas station fire, to a news chaser like me on a slow night, is the next best thing to having Mount St. Helens flare up in the middle of downtown. And this one sounded like a charm.

The fastest way to get there was straight through that part of town where even the street-walkers go in after dark and the cops don't go at all if they can help it. I ran the red light and turned left onto what the *Herald* city desk fondly calls Hell Street.

Where my car died.

I sat there in the intersection like a wad of gum stuck on the ballroom floor while the traffic whirled and screeched around me and the radio monitor taunted me with the voice of a fire captain calling for help: "*It's gonna blow . . . the pump's gonna blow . . . oh, geez, lookit that!*"

All I could do was take notes off the monitor, magically transforming the makings of a page-one story into a sorry three paragraphs to be cast adrift

somewhere between Ann Landers and the want ads.

I abandoned the car, looking for a phone where even a dead car in the middle of the street would have a way of disappearing before I got back to it. The best hope was a bar on the corner with a wino passed out beside the entrance, the Shorty's Pub version of a doorman.

The peeling red door was propped open with an empty wooden Coke case to catch the night breeze, which was laden with street dust. I stepped inside—that was when I saw him.

And one smoldering gas station, more or less, didn't matter anymore.

"Thom!" I called to him, and his face tilted up slowly. I strained to be sure I had recognized him after all. I felt the way a kid would, upturning an old and familiar rock in grandma's garden, and the underside of it is all worms and black beetles, but it's still the same rock.

He waved at me with a grudging tip of his

"It's right behind you,
standing upright.
I think it just wants
to show you
how it stretches out
to three or four feet
taller than you are.
It could drop
and be on you
like a spider . . ."

hand from a shadowed table in the corner of the room. "How's it goin', Hank?" he said.

I wanted to run in two directions at the same time. One way, to call the city desk and tell them that I'd found Thom McClure—State Lieutenant Governor McClure, whose wife, on yesterday's front page, had pronounced him "probably dead, wherever he is."

And the other way, just to get to him. We weren't close friends, but he was always straight with me, and that made him special.

I picked up the half-empty glass of beer from the table in front of him; it was lukewarm to the touch. "Give me a gimlet or give me death, you used to say. Your tastes have changed," I told him.

His mouth twitched once in a failed attempt at the grin I used to call "boyish." He was wearing remnants of the same gray pin-striped suit he'd worn the last time I saw him three months ago, only now it sagged on him. And the white hair wasn't just a trace at the temples anymore.

"You must know a lot of people are looking for you," I said.

"I don't keep up with the news much." His eyes darted as if to focus on someone standing directly behind me; I turned, but there was no one close or paying any attention to us.

"Look, Hank, I've got some . . . business to settle, that's all," he said.

"Some business. Let me fill you in on the headlines. The cops say you were kidnapped, and the governor himself has been offering to pay the ransom demand. Except there hasn't been any."

He kicked a chair out toward me. "So I'm the big catch of the day, so far as you're concerned. I should've known there was no hole dark enough

where I could hide from you. Sit down, Windell."

The bartender sauntered over, and I ordered two cold ones. "Bottle, not tap." Thom's glass looked like it had been washed in a vat of old floor wax.

"I've got lots of time to talk," he said. "Talking helps keep me awake, and having you here beats yammering to myself."

Almost by reflex, I reached for my notebook, and this time the smile came through for him.

"Good luck," he said. "Print any of this and they'll think we're both crazy. I figure telling you the whole story is the best way to make you go away and forget you saw me."

I already wished I could. The Aspen tan was gone from his face, replaced by a color like sour milk. His eyes had a raw, red cast.

He took a swallow of beer. "Well, here it is," he said. "I know, I told you before that I was having trouble getting to sleep. But I never told you why."

I remembered. It had been after an interview. He'd asked me to straighten up his quotes, because he was half asleep and not making much sense. I'd thought he'd simply tied one on the night before.

"Nightmares," he said. "The way it started, I would dream every night that I was being followed. I'd turn and almost catch a glimpse of the thing behind me, but never quite. And I'd wake up screaming."

"You must have been a joy to your wife."

He fumbled for the last cigarette in the package. I lit it for him to save time.

"You should go into marriage counseling, Windell. Except for being divorced, you're a natural." He sucked the smoke down to his toes. "The fact is, my wife did get sick of it." His head jerked sharply to the left of me; the eyes narrowed at nothing.

He sat frozen in that expression. To bring him around, I asked, "So then what happened?"

"She kept after me to get help. I had a physical, and there was nothing wrong with me. I told her I couldn't go in for therapy or anything like that; certified nuts don't get themselves elected. But the same dream went on and went on, and I finally gave up."

"This 'something' kept following you?"

He dropped the cigarette stub into the beer glass. It hissed at being killed.

"The shrink said it meant I had some subconscious fear, some big worry always tagging after me. And to make it go away, I would have to face up to it. He said—"

Thom's eyes trained on the front door of the bar.

"He said the next time I dreamed, I should turn and hold my ground. I should call out, 'Who are you? What do you want?' and make the thing come out and identify itself so I could see it for what it really was . . ."



"So that's what you did?"

He pressed his fingertips against the hollows of his cheeks. His hands were shaking. "Yes." The shake spread to the sound of his voice, almost a quivering whisper. "The first couple of times, nothing happened. I just woke up. It was the third time I called that it . . . came out."

He said something else, too softly for me to hear.

"What was it?"

He was staring at the doorway again, not drunk or doped up. His eyes moved like the lights in a pinball game. I turned. Again, nothing.

I waved my hand in front of his face. "What are you looking for?"

But he ignored that one. "You asked me what it was," he said. "Let me give you a big tip, Windell. Go ask the cops how many killings there've been right around this area in the last month. I'd say ten or twelve at least, but some of those they might not know about. Ask them how badly the bodies were torn apart. And then ask them what they think could have done it."

I go through a stack of police reports every day: bar shootings, break-ins, rape accounts, something for everybody. It's all relatively good clean fun. Anything really splashy, you have to find out some other way and then come back and pry it out of them.

"I remember just one," I told him. "A wino, no name. They said he died of a pickled gizzard in the alley, and the dogs got him."

"Check again. The dogs never had it so good."

I jerked at the touch of a hand on my shoulder. The bartender was standing behind me. I glanced up past his apron splotched with colors Picasso never heard of.

"That your Ford in the street outside?" he asked. I nodded. "'Snothing to me, but I'd go take care of it if I was you."

I stood and saw my car framed through the neon Schlitz sign in the front window, surrounded by a pack of three teenaged street hoods. One guy was working at the door lock with a piece of wire.

I looked at Thom. "Suppose I was dumb enough to go out there, would you still be here if and when I got back?"

"Truth to tell, Hank, I don't know," he said.

"Thanks." I sat down again. I ordered two more beers and told the barkeep to let me know if they needed any help hoisting the motor out. "Okay," I said to Thom, "you dared this nightmare thing to show itself, and it did. Then what?"

What I really wanted to ask was what the state's lieutenant governor was doing hiding out in a part of town where a dead wino is the local version of a dog's best friend. But at least he was talking; I didn't want to throw him off.

"Then?" he said. His line of sight shifted over the top of my head. "Why don't you ask *it*? It's right behind you."

There was no glint of good humor in his eyes. I turned quickly. Behind me was nothing but a gray haze of cigarette smoke.

"Oh, you can't see it," he said. "But I can. I do. All the time. And I have to watch it, because it wants to get away from me, but it can't so long as I'm watching. I didn't make up the rules. I just learned."

He took a long drink, his eyes never closing. "It's standing upright now. It was like that the first time I saw it. I think it just wants to show you how it stretches out to three or four feet taller than you are. It could drop and be on you like a spider, except I'm watching it."

I lifted my bottle in a toast to the air behind me. "Here's lookin' at you, kid."

"Not funny, Hank," he said. I already knew it wasn't.

"I called it out," he said. "That was the mistake. Like a vampire, you know—it can't come in and get you unless you invite it. I did the same as saying, 'Hi, there, come on in and let's talk about how I can get rid of you.' And it left my dreams after that, all right."

He was rolling the bottle back and forth between his hands, his wedding band clacking and chattering against the glass. "I woke up freezing cold. I thought my heart was going to pound a hole right through my chest, and I was screaming again. Suzanne grabbed me and tried to hold me down. I couldn't stop. She switched on the nightstand light, and there—"

He stopped, took a deep breath to calm himself. "There it was at the side of the bed, standing

over her. The tongue of the thing uncoiled and dripped across the back of her neck. She didn't even notice. I passed out. And the next day, I found our German shepherd dead—torn apart—in the backyard."

His head dipped suddenly like a fishing bobber taken by a small perch. "I shouldn't have had those two beers, Hank. Can't stay awake . . . Haven't slept in forty-eight hours, maybe more."

His eyes aimed half-lidded toward the door again, and he pointed. His voice rose. Two men at the bar turned and stared back at him.

"See it?" he said. "See? It thinks it can sneak out. But I see you, you son of a bitch! I'm still awake."

He sat up stiffly. "It got the dog, and it got the kid next door. You remember that, Hank? Nobody ever knew what happened to him—just disappeared from his bed one night. But I knew. I as good as killed him myself, because I fell asleep."

I glanced around us.

"It's over by the jukebox," Thom said. "Flexing its . . . paws like a cat. The claws come out when the fingers bend. Now it's coming this way again."

He slapped himself sharply twice. "Now do you see what I'm doing here? I'm giving it fresh meat nobody will miss—bums, winos, transients. I've got to sleep sometime. I don't know what else to do."

He slumped against the table. "Oh, damn . . . I can't . . . hold on anymore. Get out of here, Hank."

I grabbed his shoulders and shook him. "Thom!"

I told myself, *Wait a minute. The guy is dead tired. Let him sleep.*

And then I shook him again harder.

"Thom!"

And heard a scraping noise behind me. I spun sideways in my chair like a carnival ride. Beer bottles clattered off the table around me, but Thom didn't stir.

But I scared the barkeep, and he stumbled backwards a step. "Pick up this mess before you go," he said, angry now. He gestured toward Thom with a snap of the red rag in his hand. "And get him outta here. This ain't no flophouse."

I nodded and nodded again; even my neck had the shakes. "Can I use the phone?"

"Sure. For fifteen cents, same as I always charge the President." He snapped the rag toward a pay phone on the wall across the room.

I dialed the first three numbers of the governor's security office.

I tried not to wonder what knocked aside the Coke case holding the door open.

A darker shape flowed into the night-blackened rectangle of the closing door.

I dialed the rest of the number, and only then

realized that I'd never heard a dial tone. The phone against my ear was cold and quiet as a rock.

I dropped the receiver. It thumped against the wall, tapping, tapping.

The jukebox drummed out a last chorus of "Stand by Your Man" and killed itself.

The drunks at the bar turned frozen, staring at the window like a line of machine men programmed and switched off in unison.

And the front window shattered. The neon Schlitz sign sputtered and snapped.

"Damn you punks!" The roaring protest of the barkeep boomed and echoed. He barreled around the edge of the counter and toward the window, his right arm extended like a bayonet, his hand dwarfing the snub-nosed shape of a revolver.

"You out there!"—and he leaned out.

My feet perversely sprinted me across the room in exactly the direction I didn't want to go. I reached to catch the collar of his shirt and pull him back.

His feet flew up in front of my face. The heel of one shoe cracked me in the jaw and staggered me as he was lifted and dragged through the broken glass into the darkness outside.

There was one shot, one muffled, throaty sound, and a frenzy of tearing and breaking.

I ran outside—me, the hero too scared to stand up for his own car. But hell, this was a *story*.

The barkeep—most of him—was on the sidewalk just beyond the window. I recognized him by the red rag still clenched in his left hand.

I don't like to think what became of his right.

I turned and caught a glimpse, almost, not quite, of something watching me just out of sight down the street.

Questions are my business, and Thom never told me the answers he'd gotten. I called out, "Who are you? What do you want?"

And the next day, I broke two big stories—two page-one headlines.

One was a string of killings in the wino district. Thom was right; the total came to a dozen known, not counting the barkeep.

The cops put out poison for the dogs.

Positioned higher, with a banner head, was the story telling how Thom died. The doctors said that what finally got him was heart failure. They tried to give him a sedative, but he refused it and stayed awake until the end.

And one story more: about the nurse found slaughtered in the hospital parking lot.

I'm tired now. I want to go to sleep.

But I had this dream last night about being followed, and I already know the answer.

It wants me. 17



A FRIEND IN NEED

BY LISA TUTTLE

A CHANCE ENCOUNTER AT AN AIRPORT BECOMES
AN EXERCISE IN MEMORY ... OR IMAGINATION ...
OR SOMETHING FAR STRANGER.

Photographs lie, like people, like memories. What would it prove if I found Jane's face and mine caught together in a picture snapped nearly twenty years ago? What does it mean that I can't find such a photograph?

I keep looking. My early life is so well documented by my father's industrious camera work that Jane's absence seems impossible. She was, after all, my best friend; and all my other friends—including one or two I can't, at this distance, identify—are there in black and white as they run, sit, stand, scowl, cry, laugh, grimace, and play around me. Page after page of birthday parties, dress-up games, bicycle riding, ice-cream eating, of me and my friends Shelly, Mary, Betty, Carl, Julie, Howard, Bubba, and Pam. But not Jane, who is there in all my memories.

Was she ever really there? Did I imagine her into existence? That's what I thought for twelve years, but I don't believe that anymore.

I saw her in the Houston airport today and I

recognized her, although not consciously. What I saw was a small woman of about my own age with dark, curly hair. Something about her drew my attention.

We were both waiting for a Braniff flight from New York, already five minutes late. A tired-looking man in uniform went behind the counter, made a throat-clearing noise into the microphone, and announced that the flight would be an hour late.

I swore and heard another voice beside me, like an echo. I turned my head and met her eyes. We laughed together.

"Are you meeting someone?" she asked.

"My mother."

"What a coincidence," she said flatly. "We've both got mothers coming to visit."

"No, actually my mother lives here. She went to New York on business. Your mother lives there?"

"Long Island," she said. It came out as one word; I recognized the New Yorker's pronunciation.

"That's where you're from?"

"Never west of the Hudson until two years

ago." Her sharp eyes caught my change of expression. "You're surprised?"

"No." I smiled and shrugged, because the feeling of familiarity was becoming stronger. "I thought I knew you, that's all. Like from a long time ago. Grade school?"

"I'm Jane Renzo," she said, thrusting out her hand. "Graduate of Gertrude Folwell Elementary School and Elmont High, class of '73."

Jane, Jane Renzo, I thought. Had I known someone by that name? There were distant resonances, but I could not catch them. "Cecily Cloud," I said, taking her hand.

"What a great name!"

Our hands unclasped and fell apart. She was grinning; there was a hint of a joke in her eyes, but also something serious.

"But it doesn't ring any bells?" I asked.

"Oh, it does, it definitely does. Sets the bells a-ringing. It's the name I always wanted. A name like a poem. I hated always being plain Jane." She made a face.

"Better than Silly Cecily," I said. "The kids used to call me Silly until I got so used to it that it sounded like my real name. But I always hated it. I used to wish my parents had given me a strong, sensible name that couldn't be mispronounced or misspelled or made fun of—like Jane."

Jane. Memory stirred, but it was like something deep in a forest. I couldn't get a clear sight of it.

"We all have our own miseries, I guess," she said. She looked at her watch and then at me, a straightforward, friendly look. "We've got time to kill before this flight gets here. You want to go sit down somewhere and have some coffee?"

The rush of pleasure I felt at her suggestion was absurdly intense, inappropriate, as if she were a long-lost friend, returned to me when I had nearly given up hope of seeing her again. Trying to understand it, I said, "Are you sure we haven't met before?"

She laughed—a sharp, defensive sound.

Hastily, afraid of losing our easy rapport, I said, "It's only that I feel I know you. Or you remind me of someone. You never came to Houston when you were a kid?"

She shook her head.

"College?"

"Montclair State." We had begun to walk together in search of a coffee shop, down the long, windowless, carpeted, white-lit corridor. It was like being inside a spaceship, I thought, or in an underground city of the distant, sterile future. We were in Houston, but we might as easily have been in New York, Los Angeles, or Atlanta for all the cues our surroundings gave us. It was a place set apart from

the real world, untouched by time or season, unfettered by the laws of nature.

"It's like the future," I said.

Jane looked at the curving walls and indirect lighting and gave me an appreciative smile. "It is kind of *Star Trek*," she said.

We came to rest in a small, dim, overpriced restaurant which was almost empty, in contrast to the bar on one side and the fast-food cafeteria on the other. I saw by my watch that it was too late for lunch and too early for dinner. We ordered coffee, causing the middle-aged waitress to sigh heavily and stump away.

"Actually, I'd rather have a shot of Tullamore Dew," said Jane. "Or a large snifter of brandy."

"Did you want—"

She shook her head. "No, no. Better not. It's just that the thought of seeing my mother again has me wanting reinforcement. But I'd be less capable of dealing with her drunk than I am sober."

I looked at her curiously, because she had struck me from the first as a capable, almost fearless person. "You don't get along with your mother?"

"Something like that. I moved out here to get away from her, and she still won't let me be. She calls me every night. Sometimes she cries. She won't believe that I'm grown up and that I have my own life to live, a life I've chosen. She's still waiting for me to give up this silliness and move back home. My sisters got away because they got married. But in her eyes I'm still a child."

The waitress returned, setting our coffees down before us with unnecessary emphasis. I watched the dark brown liquid slide over the rim of my cup, to be caught in the shallow white bowl of the saucer.

"You're lucky if you and your mother can relate to each other as people," Jane said.

I nodded, although I had never given the matter any thought; I'd simply taken it for granted. "We have disagreements, but we're pretty polite about them," I said.

This made Jane laugh. "Polite," she said. "Oh, my." She peeled the foil top off a plastic container of coffee whitener. "You're so lucky ... to have had a happy childhood and a mother who knows how to let go."

It seemed at first acceptable, the way she so calmly passed judgment on my life, as if she knew it; then, suddenly, strange.

"I think I had a fairly normal childhood," I said. "Very ordinary. At least, it always seemed that way to me." It had been suburban, middle-class, and sheltered. I saw my experiences reflected in the lives of my friends, and I found it hard to believe that Jane had come from a background terribly dissimilar. "You were unhappy as a child?"

Jane hesitated, stirring her coffee from black to brown. Then she said, "I don't remember."

"What do you mean?"

"Just that. I don't remember my childhood. Most of it, anyway. It's as if I went to sleep when I was five and didn't wake up until I was twelve. The years in between are a blank."

I stared at her, trying to understand. I couldn't believe it. I didn't doubt that I had forgotten much of my own childhood, but there remained a satisfyingly large jumble of memories that I could rummage around in when the need arose. Some of the things that had happened to me remained as vivid in my imagination as if they had just happened: the day I had broken my bride doll, a rabbit-shaped cake my mother had baked one Easter, the taste of water warm from the garden hose at the height of summer, the Christmas when I had been sick, games of hide-and-seek, classroom embarrassments ... I had only to let down the barriers to be flooded by memories, most of them far more intense than the recollections of anything that had happened to me as an adult. To be without such memories was to be without a childhood, to lack a certain identity.

"I can remember a few things from when I was very young," Jane said into my stunned silence. "None of them pleasant. And my sisters have told me things ... it's just as well I don't remember. The things I've forgotten can't hurt me."

"But why? What happened to you? What was so terrible?"

"I'm sure other kids survived a lot worse. In fact, I know that for certain. There's no telling what will make one kid break and another survive, or what kind of defense mechanisms are needed. I work with emotionally disturbed children, and some of them have every right to be, given their backgrounds, while others come from loving families and just ... crack over things that other kids take in stride. All I can say about the things that happened to me—well, I had my way of dealing with them, whether it was a good way or not. Forgetting, blotting it out, was part of it."

She sounded defensive and apologetic. I tried to look reassuring. "You don't have to— If it makes you uncomfortable, don't talk about it."

"No, that's it, I *do* want to talk about it. But I don't want to bore you. I don't want to burden you with my old stories."

"I don't mind at all," I said. "I'm happy to listen, if it helps you to talk."

"I think it might help. Well ... " She cleared her throat and took a sip of coffee, looking at me self-consciously over the cup. "One of my earliest memories is when I was about four. My mother was forty-nine and menopausal. She was crazy that year, more than usual. Any little thing could set her off,

**Suddenly
I remembered.
"Of course.
That's who you
remind me of—
an imaginary friend
named Jane.
She was everything
I wanted to be
and wasn't.
Isn't that funny,
that my imaginary friend
should remind me
of you?"**

and when she got angry, she got violent. I can't remember what it was I did, but it was probably something as minor as interrupting her while she was thinking—I got swatted for that more than once. At any rate, she started screaming. We were in the kitchen. She grabbed the carving knife and came for me, yelling that she'd cut off my hands so I couldn't make any more trouble."

"Jane!"

She shrugged, smiling wryly. "I'm sure I remember the knife as bigger than it really was. And maybe she wouldn't have hurt me at all. But what did I know? I was a little kid. And when somebody comes at you with a knife, the instinct is to get the hell away. She chased me all through the house. I finally hid in a cabinet and listened to her looking for me. One of my sisters got my father, and he managed to calm her down. But nobody knew where I was, and I was afraid to come out. I crouched there in the dark, beneath the bathroom sink, for hours, until I decided it was safe to come out. I hadn't heard her screaming for a long time, but I was afraid that she might be tricking me and that I'd open the door to find her on the other side, the knife in her hand and a horrible smile on her face."

"Was she insane?" I asked quietly.

"No." The denial came too quickly. Jane paused and shrugged. "I don't know. Define the term. Generally, she could cope. Was she really over the edge, or just trying to scare me into being good? It's hard to decide even now. She was very unhappy at that time in her life, and she's always been a very self-dramatizing person. We all have our own ways of dealing with life. What's insane?"

"I don't know," I said, although I thought I did.

"Was she violent toward you most of the time? Did you go in fear of your life?"

"Sometimes. It was hard to know where you stood with her. That's the worst thing for a kid. I couldn't count on her, I didn't know how to get the right responses. Sometimes she would be very loving, sometimes what I did would make her laugh. At other times the same thing would have her screaming at me. But more often she turned her anger against herself. She must have tried to kill herself—or at least she pretended to—half a dozen times. I remember her lying on the floor in the living room with an empty bottle of pills and a half-full bottle of vodka. She told us she was going to die, and she forbade us to call for help. We were supposed to sit there and watch her die, so that she could die looking at the faces she loved most. We didn't dare move. Finally she seemed to have passed out, and Sue, my oldest sister, tried to call Dad. But the second her hand touched the telephone, my mother sat up and started screaming at her for being a disobedient bastard."

"Lord," I said, when Jane paused to sip coffee. I tried to imagine it, but could not quite achieve the child's point of view. "How did you survive?"

"Well, I blotted it out, mostly. I had my imaginary life." She smiled.

"How do you mean?"

"When you were a kid, weren't there some things which seemed just as real to you as real life, although you knew they were different? The things you didn't tell grown-ups about, although they were every bit as real and important—if not more so—as life at school and at home?"

"You mean like pretend games?" I asked. "I used to pretend—" And suddenly I remembered. "Of course. That's who you remind me of." I laughed, feeling silly. "Jane. I had an imaginary friend named Jane."

Jane's smile was somewhat wistful. "What was she like?"

"Oh, she was everything I wanted to be and wasn't. Practical and neat instead of dreamy and disorganized. Her hair was dark and curly instead of straight and mousy. She read a lot, like me, and knew all kinds of wonderful games. She had my favorite name, of course." I shrugged and then laughed. "She was like a real person. She didn't have any magical powers—except, of course, that she disappeared from time to time. She was actually rather like you, I guess. Isn't that funny, that my imaginary friend should remind me of you?"

Jane didn't look as if she found it particularly odd or amusing. She said, "I had imaginary friends, too. Except, at the time, they weren't in the least imaginary to me. The life I made up for myself was more important to me than my real

life. It was my escape. It was how I survived the childhood I don't remember—the things that *really* happened to me." She paused to sip her coffee and then went on.

"I was six years old. I was wearing a brand-new brown velvet dress with a white lace collar. I'm not sure why, but I think I was going to a party later in the afternoon. I was feeling very special and happy, and I was sitting at the dining room table eating my lunch. My mother sat next to me and nagged me. She kept warning me to be careful. She kept telling me how expensive the dress was, and how difficult it would be to clean if I got it dirty. She told me not to be as clumsy as I usually was, and she warned me that I'd better not spill anything on myself. So of course, I did. I slopped a little bit of milk onto my dress. At that, she grabbed me and pulled me up out of my chair, screaming at me that I was messy, disobedient, and a complete disgrace. I didn't deserve to have nice clothes. I was an animal. I ate like a clumsy pig, and I didn't deserve the nice meals she fixed for me. I should never have been born. Nobody could stand to be around me. I should be kept in a cage where I could spill my food all over me to my heart's content. Screaming all the way, she dragged me up to the attic and left me there to meditate on my sins."

My stomach clenched with sympathy at Jane's level, matter-of-fact tone.

"But the odd thing," Jane went on, "the odd thing was that I *liked* the attic. I always had liked it. Being taken up there and left was no punishment at all. I was always begging to be allowed to play up there, but she would never let me. I could only go up there when my father went, to help him clean, or to get out the Christmas ornaments, or to store old clothes away. I suppose I liked the attic so much because it was outside her domain. She would send my father up for things instead of going herself. It was the only place in the house that didn't belong to her."

"And that was where she left me. Where I couldn't mess up any of her things. I was left all alone up there under the roof. It was cold and quiet and filled with cardboard boxes. I was very far away from the rest of the house. I couldn't hear my family downstairs—for all I knew, they might have gone out, or just disappeared. And I knew my mother couldn't hear me or see me, either. I could do anything I wanted and not be punished for it. I could think or say whatever I liked. For the first time in my life, it seemed, I was completely free."

"So I pretended that my family didn't exist—or at least that I didn't belong to it. I made up a family I liked a lot better. My new mother was pretty and young and understanding. She never lost her temper and she never shouted at me. I could talk to her. My new father was younger, too, and spent more time at home with us. My real sisters were so much



older than me that they sometimes seemed to live in another world, so my new sisters, in my made-up family, were closer to my age. I had a younger sister who would look up to me and ask me for advice, and I had a sister exactly my age who would be my best friend. She was good at all the things I wasn't. And instead of being ugly, with kinky hair like mine, she was pretty with long, straight hair that she would let me braid and put up for her." She stopped short, as if on the verge of saying something else. Instead, she sipped her coffee. I waited, not saying a word.

"I know I invented them," she said. "I know it was all a game. But still it seemed—it still seems—that I didn't make them up but found them somewhere, and found a way of reaching them in that faraway, warm place where they lived. I lived with them for a long time—nearly seven years. When I remember my childhood, it's the time I spent with my make-believe family that I remember. Those people."

I wanted to ask her their names, but I said nothing, almost afraid to interrupt her. Jane was looking at me, but I don't think she saw me.

"I sat all alone in that cold, dusty attic, and I could feel the house changing below me. I was in the attic of another house. I could hear the voices of my new family drifting up to me. I could imagine every room, how each one was furnished. When I had it all clear in my mind, I went downstairs to see for myself. It was the same size as my real house, but completely different. There was a small chord organ in the living room that my make-believe mother played in the evenings, all of us gathered around to sing old-fashioned songs. The family room had a cork floor

with woven Indian rugs on it. There was a deer head over the television set; my make-believe father liked to hunt. The wallpaper in the kitchen was gold and brown, and the cookie jar was shaped like a rabbit dressed in overalls. There was a big oak tree in the backyard that was perfect for climbing, perfect for playing pretend games in. It could be a pirate ship, or—"

My skin was crawling. It was my house she was describing. My parents. My childhood. "What about the front yard?" I asked.

"Another oak tree. We had lots of acorns in the fall. There was a magnolia tree on one side, and a big brick planter box built out of the front of the house. It was great to play in. I'm amazed those blue flowers managed to grow with us stomping on them all the time. Your mother—"

"It was you," I said.

She shut up and looked down into her coffee.

"Why didn't you say?" I asked. "Why this game? Why pretend you didn't know me? Did you think I'd forgotten? Jane?"

She gave me a wary look. "Of course I thought you'd forgotten. I wasn't sure myself that any of it had happened. I never thought I'd see you again. I thought I'd made you up."

"Made me up!" I laughed uneasily. "Come on, Jane! What are you talking about? What's the point of this whole story?"

"It's not a story," she said. Her voice was high and stubborn, like a child's. "I knew you wouldn't believe it."

"What is it you want me to believe? We were friends when we were children. We both remember that. But if you tell me that you grew up in New York, and I know that I—"

"Why did you say you had an *imaginary* friend called Jane?"

"Because I thought—" And I stopped and stared, feeling the little hairs prickling all over me as I remembered. "Because you disappeared," I said softly. "Whenever you left to go home, you just vanished. I saw you come and go out of nowhere, and I knew that real people didn't do that." I was suddenly afraid that I was sitting at a table with a ghost.

As if she read my thoughts, Jane reached across the table and gripped my hand. There was a sullen, challenging look on her face. Her hand was warm and firm and slightly damp. I remembered that, as a child, too, she had been solid and real. Once her firm grasp, just in time, had kept me from falling out of a tree. We had tickled each other and played tag and helped each other into dress-up clothes. She had liked to braid my hair.

Jane took her hand away to look at her wristwatch. "We'd better go," she said.

My skin was crawling. It was my house she was describing. My parents. My childhood.

I thought of the first time I had seen her, coming down the attic stairs. I was surprised to find a stranger in my house, but she had looked back at me, perfectly at ease, and asked me if I wanted to play. We were friends in that instant—although I couldn't remember, now, what we had said to each other or what we played. Only that first moment of surprise remains hard and clear and whole in my mind, like the last time I saw her disappear.

Usually when Jane left she simply walked away, and I did not see where she went. She was different from my other friends in that I never walked her home and we never played at her house. I didn't even know where her house was; I knew only, from things she had said, that it was in a different neighborhood.

But that last day, I remember, we had been playing Parcheesi on the floor of my bedroom. Jane said goodbye and walked out. A few seconds later I thought of something I had meant to ask or tell her, and I scrambled to my feet and went after her. She was just ahead of me in the hallway, and I saw her go into the living room. She was just ahead of me, in plain sight, in daylight—and then she wasn't. She was gone. I looked all through the living room, although I knew she hadn't hidden from me; there hadn't been time.

I couldn't believe what I had seen. Things like that didn't happen, except on *The Twilight Zone*. I was eleven and a half years old, too old to have imaginary friends. I never saw Jane again.

Until today.

And now she was standing, preparing to leave me.

Hastily I stood up, pushing my chair away from the table. "I don't get it," I said. "I don't understand what you're saying."

She looked at me and shrugged. "Why do you think I know? I thought I'd imagined you, and here you are. But I grew up in New York, you grew up in Texas. We *couldn't* have known each other as kids. But that's what we both remember."

"And now what?"

She smiled at me ironically. "And now the plane is coming in. Let's go."

We walked together through the featureless corridors in silence. It felt right and familiar for me

to be at her side, as if we'd never been apart, as if we'd walked together many times before.

"I wish she wasn't coming," Jane said suddenly. "I wish I could have told her no. I wish I didn't have to deal with her. Will I be running away from my mother all my life?"

I touched her arm. She was real. She was there. I felt very close to her, and yet I knew, sadly, that she must be lying to me, or crazy. One of us must be. I said, "You'll be all right. You're strong. You're grown up now, and you've got your own life. Just tell yourself that. Your mother's just another woman. She can't make you do anything you don't want to do."

She looked at me. "You always thought I was braver than I really was. It's funny, but your thinking that made me try to live up to it. In order to be as brave and strong as you thought I was, I did things that terrified me. Like the time I climbed from a tree up onto the roof of the house—"

"I was terrified!" I said. Her words brought it back vividly, those moments when, from my own precarious treetop perch, I had seen her thin, small figure drop to the dark shingles of the roof, the breath catching in my throat as if I were the one in danger.

"So was I," she said. "But it was worth it for the way you looked at me. I'd always been a quiet little coward, but to you I was wild and daring."

Through the big window we saw a bright orange plane land and roll along the runway.

"Thank you," said Jane. "I needed a friend today."

"Not just today," I said. "Now that we've found each other, we'll get together again, often."

She smiled and looked away. I followed her gaze and saw the plane docking.

"That's ours," I said, turning my head to look at her. She was gone.

I whirled away from the window, scanning the crowds for her dark hair, her white blouse, her particular way of moving. She was nowhere to be seen.

There hadn't been time. I had turned my head only for a moment. She had been right beside me; I could feel her presence. From one second to the next, she had simply vanished.

Feeling dizzy, I moved indecisively a few steps this way, a few steps that. There was no point in searching for her. I already knew I wouldn't find her. I wondered what airport she might be waiting in; I realized she had never said where she lived. Was she able to find me because our lives briefly intersected in the bland, anonymous limbo of an airport, or could she have come to me wherever I was, because of her need?

I am waiting, wondering if I will ever see her again. Jane is real; she exists; I know I didn't imagine her. But did she imagine me? **17**

by
Douglas
Jenmac

FOUR

—IN WHICH WE FIND A SILENT PARKING GARAGE ... A STALLED ELEVATOR ...
AND A FLIGHT OF CONCRETE STEPS THAT IS ALSO A STAIRWAY TO HELL.

Late. Tired. The man pushed through the door. Easy passage. Stairwell full of shadows below, no sound, and the elevator out from four to ten.

Man on four. Going to five.

He looked up and began to climb, pushing each step away from him with resignation. He envisioned his car parked above him, deserted in a maze of yellow lines and arrows.

The door at the next turn of the stairwell pushed him back. Before him, one bold, black, modern numeral. Four.

Miscount. A day full of miscalculations. All right. Too tired to be angry. He turned and climbed again. Suit coat buttoned. Briefcase in hand. Styled hair beginning to fall slightly lower over his ears.

*Another door.

Four.

Reeling. Vision blurred, then focused, then blurred again. Vertigo swelled inside him and forced his hand to the wall. His body lowered, in slow confusion, onto the step behind him.

The man grabbed the steel railing, white paint chipping off under his grip, and pulled his unwilling mass back to its feet. He mustn't succumb to the parlor tricks of fatigue, he thought. Hysteria ran in his family and he needed to watch himself closely. The blood pounded behind his eyes, moving the stairwell six inches up, then down, like a seismic disturbance.

He lifted his foot to meet the next step. The physical act of moving forward would ease the anxiety, he told himself. By the first turn of the staircase, the man felt vindicated. The form and line of the concrete around him grew stable.

Another door.

Four.

He wanted to feel the rush of blood behind the eyes again. It would be appropriate. But it wasn't there. Something dull and empty in the groin this time. A new symptom.

Perhaps today was the day, he thought, as he began to climb again. A rivulet of sweat rolled down his spine and caused him to tremble. Perhaps today, the longest of his days in the city, would become the logical extension of the doctor's forceps pulling on his head. He censored himself for morbidity, but his mind raced ahead.

Another door.

Four.

He turned away and sat slumped on the concrete floor. Numbness moved from his toes to his knees as he lifted the briefcase onto his lap. The scream lodged in his throat, constricting his breath. The voices of a desperate litany filled his mind. His father's stroke. Unavoidable? His mother's fatal fall. Predictable? His sister's suicide. Inevitable?

No. The world had turned on them. Unexpectedly. Suddenly. With a vengeance.

Pushing down panic, he grasped for the obvious. There were periodic imperfections in the fabric of circumstance. After days, weeks, or even years, nature always dropped its mask of orderliness. It was only a matter of time.

He considered the good fortune of the last seven years. The graph line of his life had been straight, long, and black. The lack of disruption made him nervous. Tentative in decisions. Lately he'd felt a compulsion to cause an aberration himself. To get it over with. Then meditate, while healing, about a brighter future.

The man considered hurling himself down toward the sub-basement, then pushed the thought away. He remembered a meditation from his past. When adversity forced the issue like a squall over previously calm water, he would imagine himself a hundred smooth reeds. Diffuse. Eternally flexible. The storm would only harm what resisted.

He stood, straightened his tie, and began to climb upward. He sensed gears turning, moving this experience, like every other experience, behind him.

Images of a midway flooded his mind. The distortion in the mirrors of the fun house, the impossible strength to raise the black ball to the height of the bell, the rigged game of marksmanship—all tempted him. He saw himself, a small boy, moving through the thick echo of hucksters.

The next level.

Four.

He could hear the distant gears stop, start, grind, debris falling to the bottom of some great machine. He could see cracks forming and widening in the rusting hardware which held it all together.

The man screamed from the belly. Suit coat torn from his shoulders and thrown down. Briefcase

lifted above his head. Sent spinning into the empty black of the stairwell.

He waited for sounds of resistance. Impact.

Nothing.

Just cool, damp air moving upward.

The man sprawled on the steps. Gasping. This wasn't what he'd expected. Not at all. He thought he'd considered every goddamned possibility. From exotic disease to freak accident. From kidnapped to victim of ritual murder.

But those had nothing to do with this. They couldn't. He was just missing some obvious variable. Some indicator.

Not madness, his sister's malaise. But being *driven* mad. That was it. And it fit, he thought. He'd always suspected an inherently malevolent deity. Lurking somewhere. Devious and covering its tracks by token gestures of food, shelter, and the capacity for orgasm.

No, he thought. He had endured disorientation before. He could again. The question had always been essentially the same. Would he curl into the fetal position, whimpering with frustration? Would he puke up his dinner in fear? Or would they find him on their way to the office in the morning, stiff and blue?

The man put his head in his hands. Eyes crushed shut behind palms.

He heard something. Definite repetitive sound.

Footsteps ascending?

He didn't move, but watched for the shadows and sounds to grow below him.

They remained the same. Over and over.

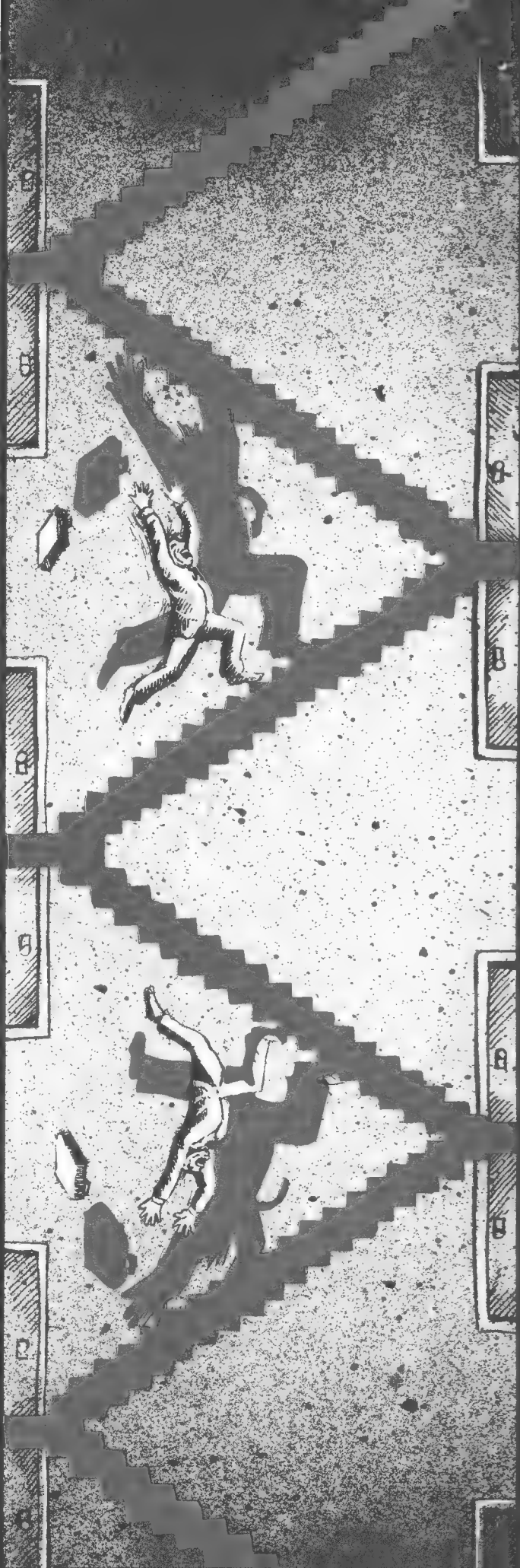
Something louder, further below. *Now*, he thought. And rose and jumped two steps, two steps, and two more to the landing. Turned. Three steps at a time downward, ankles and knees aching, lungs filling and refilling, body accelerating. The doors, steps, walls, corners, railings, flashed in peripheral sight. Bones and muscles jarred by each concrete impact. Knees and feet blurred. He watched them as if they were not his own. Appendages animated by some distant intelligence. This was a matter of sustenance. To outlast an illusion was a matter of will. To outlast circumstance, a matter of greater will. A test of endurance. Determination.

The man stopped in front of the door, eyes closed. His whole body throbbed with exertion. Hand on the cold metal knob. He would not look at the door. He would deny its importance, as he should have long ago. Give it no credibility. A false god. When he was a child, he'd denied the existence of the wolf behind the door. And that was enough.

Knob turn. Door swing. Squeak in the hinge as it closes behind him. Open eyes.

A door beyond the door.

Four. 17





IT WAS ONE OF THOSE NIGHTS WHEN A MAN'S DESTINY
COULD HANG BY THE HANDLE OF A COFFEE CUP.
IN FACT, IT WAS . . .

Midas Night

by Sam Wilson

Life, in its usual magnanimous fashion, was offering him a chance to face the limits of his courage. Eric Carew had no desire to be beaten or stabbed to death, so he stayed inside the seedy little diner.

He had never been in a fight in his twenty years; or at least he'd never *won* any of the few unpleasant physical encounters he had not managed to avoid. But even these, he knew, in the safety of retrospective reflection, had been minor affairs, brief attacks by bullies, compared to this. This would cost him much more.

He sat in the back at a stained table, trying to distract himself from his mounting fear by sketching, on a large pad, a portrait of the old man who sat at a window booth in the front of the diner. Next to the sketch pad sat a half-finished cup of coffee, dead as the moon. It had been delivered black by the surly waitress ("Cook went home sick," she'd told him. "I can give you soup and coffee—or you can go somewhere else."), and subsequent attempts to resurrect it with cream and then sugar had failed miserably. But there it was. If he ate better, he didn't pay the rent.

Starving artists, he frequently mused, were romantic figures only to *very* low-grade morons.

His mind wasn't on the lifeless substance in the cup, though. Across the street he saw three figures cloaked in the shadows of this cold, snowless January night. They had been there for a very long time.

He wouldn't look at them anymore . . .

The diner held only the three of them: Carew—a frightened art student seeking refuge; an ill-tempered middle-aged waitress who read a newspaper behind the counter next to the cash register; and the old man.

The old man might have been nine thousand years old. His long white beard tumbled from his parchmentlike face in knots and webs, spilling onto the otherwise empty table before him. He was lost in

a large knee-length coat that had apparently entered the final stages of leprosy long ago. It was buttoned, top to bottom. His eyes—

His eyes were wild.

The old man had been dozing—for centuries, perhaps. Now his eyes swept the diner, back and forth and back again. He fixed his stare on Carew.

Uncomfortable, Carew looked down at his attempt to capture that strange face with pencil strokes. It was all wrong. *This* face had to be created outward from the eyes, where the ages-old soul still burned.

Despite himself, Carew smiled. Funny how terror can fuel the imagination. This was just an old bum, seeking shelter from the cold. Apparently the waitress didn't care who came in here.

He tore the sheet from the pad.

He was in trouble. He had to do something while he still could. But what? The police . . . ?

It had been a stupid move, and he'd known it at the time. But things weren't going well for him at this point in his life. Jodi had left him, his studies were suffering as a result, and he'd needed a psychological lift. At least he'd thought so. He had cashed the student assistance check at a currency exchange instead of depositing it as usual in his minuscule savings account.

And for a few brief minutes he'd actually felt better, full of endless possibilities, carrying close to four hundred dollars in cash in his very pockets. To Carew, that amount of money to spend freely was a fortune. He had gone with the feeling. New York had been his! Fantastic meals in elegant restaurants! New, sharp-looking clothes! Broadway musicals! Perhaps—yes, this was it—a daredevil trip over to Atlantic City, where he would win untold riches! Then he would bombard Jodi with flowers, truckloads of them, gifts, promises of a secure future that couldn't fail to bring her back. Then, of course, she would marry him, and . . .

**"Why would anybody
be after you?"**

**The old man
leaned forward.
His face might have been
an abstract impression
of Hiroshima
at a certain point
in its history.
"I own the world,"
he whispered.**

And ... He had seen himself reflected in the glass of a barbershop window, fragmented through the crisscross protective iron gate, and had been aware of a fool staring back at him. The glorious feeling had vanished into the freezing air.

Meeting Jodi had been the most wonderful event of his life—at the time. Even now she flashed into his mind, golden hair sailing on the wind behind her, smile to turn his insides to sweet mud. Her image was always vivid, real. She had meant everything to him.

But he now realized that he had been no more than a hobby to her, an ego boost while she hunted for a man who could afford her. It was hopeless. She was gone for good. Maybe—if he withdrew every cent and sold what little he had—maybe he would have enough for a one-way ticket to a South Pacific island, to start a new life ...

The hell with it, he thought. Fantasy time was over. He had to live in the real world. One that included an empty apartment.

And the footsteps behind him ...

He'd seen them when he'd cashed the check, standing outside the currency exchange, three guys about his age, watching. And now here he was, seven o'clock at night, trapped in an almost empty diner miles from home, waiting to be assaulted by hoodlums. The three had made no direct threats, but they had followed him for six blocks, all the way to this diner.

Well, he'd never pretended to be a hero. If they weren't gone in ten minutes, he would definitely call the police. He looked at his wristwatch.

"Good evening, sir."

The old man was standing at his table. Startled, Carew quickly turned the sketch over.

The old man slid into the seat opposite him.

"Yes?" Carew asked.

"They're after me you know." The words came fast, but with perfect clarity.

"Pardon me?"

"They're after me. I got away."

"Who's after you?"

"They are."

Carew felt embarrassed, uneasy. He had never felt comfortable in situations like this. This derelict was obviously off in his own dream world.

"I own the world, you know."

"Oh?"

"They want to put me away."

"Yes, that is a problem."

"But they won't get me again."

Behind the counter the waitress turned a page of her paper.

Across the street, the burning ends of three cigarettes moved forward in the darkness.

"Let me have your coffee."

Carew felt the walls closing in on him; panic was squeezing his chest. *Hello, police department? I seem to have a problem—*

"Your coffee," said the old man.

"What? Yes, yes, take it!"

The other reached across the table with hands that, to Carew, looked as if they'd been young before Babylon. With both hands he grasped the cup, brought it to his lips, and drank down the rest of the coffee without a sound.

Now I know you're immortal, if you can drink that, thought Carew. He looked around. *I can't stay in here all night. They can very easily come in here and get me. At any second.*

Taking a deep breath, he rose from the table, trying to collect his thoughts. He'd never called the police for help in his life. What actual *proof* did he have that he was in danger? How should he word it?

The old man reached over, grabbed him by the sleeve of his jacket, and pulled him back down.

"Where are you going?"

"I—I have to make a phone call."

The old man kept his grip locked on Carew's sleeve. "They're after me. *You've got to help me.*"

Carew pulled free, gently, but didn't get back up. Something in the man's voice, something in the man's eyes, held him.

"Why would anybody be after you?"

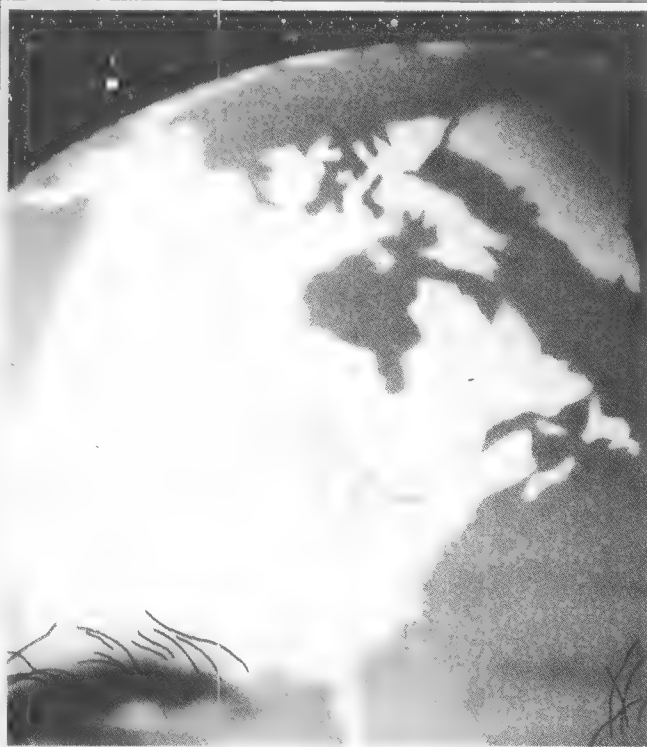
The old man leaned forward. His face might have been an abstract impression of Hiroshima at a certain point in its history.

"I own the world," he whispered. "They keep me locked up so I can't be in charge."

It was all so ridiculous, Carew told himself. But he felt himself drawn by the old man's passion.

"If you own the world, why are you asking for my coffee? I mean, you're not exactly dressed like—"

"Only a few people know. They say I'm crazy, too old, that I forget things. They say they have to take care of me. They give me drugs, hide me in



strange places, make me look like this so nobody will believe me if I get away from them. They tricked me!"

"How did you get to own the world, anyway?"
"I made a deal!"

Carew was fascinated, but he didn't have the time. A thought occurred to him.

"Are those the guys who are after you, across the street?"

The old man turned quickly and looked, then turned back and shook his head.

"Not them."

"Well, I think they're after *me*."

"They try to control me. But the world, everything, belongs to me!"

And just then the three of them walked beneath a streetlight and across the street, moving toward the diner. Their hands were pushed forward in the pockets of their jackets. One had a large chain draped over his shoulder.

"I'm going to call the police."

Behind the counter the waitress was oblivious to the coming violence. She turned another page.

The three of them didn't come into the diner, but split up just outside it, two to the left, the one with the chain to the right, all out of sight.

Now he was sure. He got up and went to the telephone, picked up the receiver, and tapped out the emergency number. *Life*, he thought. An hour ago he'd welcomed death, his one and only great love gone away. Now, faced with its very real possibility: *I guess I'm having second thoughts about the whole thing.*

Right. Go out and tell the big guy with the chain a few good jokes.

He remembered that he didn't know exactly where he was; he turned to ask the waitress the address.

He saw that the old man was not there.

The phone buzzed briefly, then went dead.

He hung up, picked up the receiver, dialed again. This time he was greeted with silence. Icy claws began to tear down his spine. He tried it once more. Nothing. Silence. Nothing.

"Excuse me," Carew said to the waitress. Tears were about to explode from his eyes; he fought to hold back the flood.

The waitress looked up at him.

"Your phone is out of order."

She shrugged and went back to the newspaper.

He was in trouble. He was trapped, trapped. He resisted an impulse to crawl up into a ball, resisted falling into the dark pit of hopelessness. There had to be knives behind the counter. Perhaps he could grab one, bluff his way —

Then, as in a nightmare, things began to happen quickly.

Outside, someone was shouting, sending loud, sharp barks hammering through the air. It was enough to bring the waitress to the window.

"My God," she said.

He never knew what made him move across the diner, out into the cold night, but suddenly he was there.

Apparently they'd gotten bored waiting for him; the three of them were beating up the old man, punching him, throwing him back and forth. He was alone with them on the street.

Carew stood frozen, watching. An impulse to run surged up from deep within him. He could get away now; they weren't looking at him. Run, call the cops for the old man.

They slammed the old man against the side of a building next to the diner.

"Let him go," Carew said.

Now it was too late to run; he was committed to this new course of action.

They dropped the old man on the sidewalk, advanced on Carew, two with steel pipes, one with his chain.

Carew rushed forward, smashed the tallest of the three in the mouth with his fist before he could swing the chain from his shoulder. For this act of daring he was rewarded with the sight of a pipe coming down on his head from the left; he raised his arm, warded off the blow, felt the pipe slam against his fingers. The pain fueled his mad courage; he smashed his opponent a right to the stomach. The one with the chain was holding his face with both hands. The old man was crawling away. The third of the group stood there, momentarily confused.

A small black car was approaching, slowing, coming to a halt in the street beside them. Carew had no idea who they were; he had no desire to discover if they were friends of these three. The one who had

hit him with the pipe was coming at him, one hand clutching his stomach.

Carew knew he'd had luck and the element of surprise on his side to last this long; he turned and ran from the scene. As he ran, sucking icy air into his lungs, both hands in pain, the right one bleeding from a cut caused by scraping the tall one's teeth when he'd punched him, Carew felt fear no longer, but a sense of exhilaration. He'd been tested, he'd proven himself. It made a big difference to him.

He heard the car door shut behind him; he turned to look.

Two men were standing on the sidewalk. The three youths hadn't chased him, but stood looking at the two men, pulled back, ready, it seemed, to take flight themselves.

Carew stood and watched. One man made directly for the diner. The other reached into his pocket and withdrew a small box of some kind. He pulled from this what looked like an antenna, and pointed it at the three youths. At first, Carew mistook it for a walkie-talkie.

What happened next stunned him, defied belief.

The man didn't hold the box to his mouth. He kept it waist high. The three youths started to back away, bumping into each other. No longer predators. Prey—to something unbelievable.

Without a sound, with no fuss at all, the three of them slumped to the ground. And didn't move.

The man retracted the antenna, put the box back into his coat pocket.

Carew felt the familiar sensations of fear again.

He watched as the old man was helped into the back seat of the car. He watched as the man's partner came out of the diner and got into the front seat of the car, not even glancing at the fallen bodies on the sidewalk. As the car came down the street toward him, Carew was never more aware that he was alone, by himself on the sidewalk six or seven doors from the diner, by himself in the universe. He couldn't move.

The car stopped next to him and the man in the driver's seat got out. He was nondescript; later, Carew would remember nothing at all about him. He could have been a ghost.

He placed a very real hand on Carew's right shoulder.

"We want to thank you for your help." The man's voice was warm, yet commanding. "Please forget everything you've seen here tonight."

"What—what's going on?"

"You're very lucky the old guy likes you. We won't ... can't touch your mind. Because he really likes you. When he is specific and definite about something, it is carried out. It has to be. *Be nice to*

him, he said."

"Who were those three guys? And who is *he*?"

"They were three street punks. He is just a senile old man who is grateful to you for giving him your coffee. Your life is going to be much more ... pleasant from now on. You're a very lucky man, Mr. Carew."

"I don't understand—"

"Don't try to." The grip on his shoulder tightened, but not painfully. "World economics is very complicated, Mr. Carew. Just say, simply, that *somebody* has to be the owner; and this somebody has to be watched. We strive for balance. Or everything falls apart. But don't question. Go back to the diner. Enjoy the rest of your long, happy life."

"The diner?"

"Please ... It will explain more than I can now."

The man got back into the car, behind the wheel. In the rear the old man was asleep next to the man with the black box. The man in front leaned out the window.

"One piece of advice," he said. "Don't get greedy."

The car pulled away. When it was gone, Carew walked back toward the diner. Slowly, very slowly. He wouldn't question now. Maybe later. Maybe. At this moment all he felt was a not-unpleasant sense of anticipation.

He ignored the bodies, went inside. The waitress was still behind the counter with her newspaper. But—

It was not the same woman.

This one was young, pretty. A strange sensation engulfed him; she reminded him of his first girlfriend, junior year of high school.

Isn't that remarkable. I haven't thought of her in years.

She looked up and smiled at him.

Still not questioning, he walked over to his booth. The sketch of the old man was gone. Next to the sketch pad was a full cup of steaming hot coffee.

He sat down and turned to look at the phone. It was all still very much like a dream, yet he knew he could probably pick it up now and connect himself to a lifetime with Jodi. He might do it. He might not.

Right now he felt as he had as a child, on those delicious Christmas mornings when it was still real. Or before taking the first downward plunge on a roller coaster.

"It's fresh and good, if I do say so myself," the waitress said, smiling again. Carew smiled back at her. He sat there for a while, just staring at the cup, feeling his body tingle.

It was probably a perfect cup of coffee. He had no reason to doubt that. No reason in the world. **17**



ings of others, as I tried to solve the puzzle of what a story is.

I wanted to make stories of my own, but the first few came very hard, and bore the unmistakable imprint of an influence. Translation: I got the story idea from another guy.

Behind the selling of *All of Us Are Dying* was a man who had struggled for five years to learn to be a writer. Without my wife, Lola, I fear I would not have made it. I would have become one of those hollow-eyed persons you see who once dreamed big and whose dream has died.

After the first half-dozen stories had been written, part of the hustle was getting an agent. Through those years I found several who would let me use their names, though few cared to sign a contract with me. One of these men, Jay Richards—at the time head of the television department of the Famous Artists Agency, long since absorbed by I.F.A. (International Famous Agency), and since embedded in I.C.M. (International Creative Management), which represents me now in television and movies—agreed to read something. I showed Jay *All of Us Are Dying*. After reading it, he crossed out the title with a ballpoint pen and wrote in *Rubberface!* Then he sent it to Rod Serling, who had a new series that season called *The Twilight Zone*.

Lola and I sweated out the submission. Getting a story past an agent was a big deal, one of the heavy moments in the life of a beginning writer. And so I teetered between being nobody and being George Clayton Johnson the television writer.

We had sweated out other such moments, Lola and I, only to have the answer be a cold rejection slip or no answer at all; so though we dreamed, we looked at each other through wise eyes.

Rod Serling offered five hundred dollars for the story, before retitling it *The Four of Us Are Dying*, the best of the three titles. He adapted it for television. My story and Rod's teleplay differed radically, but now I had a television credit.

Rogue magazine ultimately published the story under the original title. Said Frank M. Robinson, the editor, "I would have bought anything with the title 'All of Us Are Dying.' It's one of those titles that speaks to everyone." It has since been reprinted



Execution, the second of Johnson's stories to be adapted for *The Twilight Zone*, featured Albert Salmi as a criminal plucked by a time machine from the hangman's noose in the year 1880, only to meet his fate eighty years in the future.

in *Author's Choice #4*, edited by Harry Harrison.

After this first sale, at lengthy intervals there would be the warm flash of money in our house, but the glow would fade before it would come again.

Through every crazy day of it, our children, Paul and Judy, were clean, warmly dressed, and never hungry. Lola kept the house spotless, the bill collectors at bay, made my friends welcome, and loved me with all her heart. She took me seriously, even while working in a nursery school, at painfully low wages, to hold things together, and even though it was clear that I was spending more time in coffee houses with people who wanted to be writers than sitting home at the typewriter. Lola believed I was going about it right because most of *them* seemed to be doing the same thing. Among that throng were some who would never write a publishable word

and some who were writers indeed, who had sold stories and published books.

I received other encouragement, too. This letter was written while *All of Us Are Dying* was in the works. It is from Ray Bradbury.

George!
Beautiful Beautiful Beautiful!
Cut it. Work over the wording of the ending a bit more, for dramatic effect.
Send it out immediately!
Beautiful idea, beautiful, beautiful.

Good luck!
Ray

He wrote to me again, after the story appeared in *Rogue*:

October 9, 1961

Dear George:
It's important to say things, but even more important to say them on paper. I told you the other night



A Penny for Your Thoughts was the third story Johnson sold to the series but this time he held out for the assignment of writing the teleplay. Dick York starred as a bank clerk whose flip of the coin bestowed upon him the power to "overhear" the secret thoughts of others. June Dayton supplied the love interest.



I'd reread *All of Us Are Dying* and how much I enjoyed it. I want to repeat that in letter form. When I come to the end of this story and read the last lines, I get gooseflesh on my neck. What greater tribute can I offer you? Thanks for the neck bumps. Here's an extra tearsheet of the story. Writers are always running low on such things.

Best from yours,
Ray

The "last lines" Ray refers to were thought up by Charles Beaumont, my best friend, a fine writer who had published much and was the brightest among us. Sitting in his car in front of his house, he told me he thought the story should have a bigger ending: "He was da-da-dah!, he was da-da-dah!, he was da-da-dah!, and all of them were dying."

I hitchhiked home that night and



Johnson's story, *The Prime Mover*, was adapted for *The Twilight Zone* by Charles Beaumont. Buddy Ebsen, as the man who moved objects by telekinesis, aided Dane Clark in his bid for a fortune, and then helped him lose it all in a single roll of the dice.

rewrote it exactly that way, for I had learned from my writer friends, Chuck Ray, William F. Nolan, John Tomerlin, and Jerry Sohl, that the art of writing is in the rewriting, and that a writer should take his ideas from whoever offers them freely.

A second story, *Execution*, was bought by Cayuga Productions, and Rod Serling adapted it beautifully. I refused to sell a third, *A Penny for Your Thoughts*, after they had shown a keen interest in it, unless I would also be hired to write the teleplay. It is because of extortion like this that they call it "breaking into television."

The script was accepted "first-draft," which wasn't the first draft to me, and created much excitement in my house the night it was aired.

The year was 1960—the second season for *The Twilight Zone*. In accepting the Emmy award for the best-written series, Rod said, "I want to

thank three writing gremlins who did the bulk of the work: Charles Beaumont, Richard Matheson, and George Clayton Johnson. Come on over, boys, and we'll cut it up like a turkey." Of course, Rod was generous. He'd done the bulk of the work, and though Charles and Richard—who'd written a staggering number of the most telling scripts—and I joked about making a visit to Rod with a hacksaw, we all knew whose Emmy it was.

It was Rod Serling who had established and maintained the quality we all strove for. He'd set certain design parameters for any story that might appear on *The Twilight Zone*. For example, there was an attitude that could be seen in any grouping of the stories that said, "Be careful what you wish for. You may get it."

There was a certain literary air, a certain talkiness, so that conflicts were more often resolved through argument than physical action—an inheritance



In *Nothing in the Dark*, a young Robert Redford played a wounded policeman who is actually Death in disguise. Gladys Cooper portrayed his victim.



In *A Game of Pool*, written by Johnson, Jack Klugman, as a small-time hustler, faced the challenge of the late champion, played by Jonathan Winters, for the highest stakes of all.

from the golden age of live television.

The stories were *realistic* fantasies about seemingly average people on average streets—a timid bank clerk, a frightened old woman, an ambitious pool shark, a desperate old man in a rest home—each of whose lives would become tilted by some extraordinary magical factor. This is a story form that has been practiced by many able writers; it is time-tested and reliable. Think of Conrad Aiken's "Silent Snow, Secret Snow"; Robert Louis Stevenson's "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"; John Collier's "Evening Primrose"; Ray Bradbury's "I Sing the Body Electric"; Charles Beaumont's "The Howling Man"; and Richard Matheson's "Third from the Sun." Rod reshaped the stories he took into a format consisting of a standard opening, a teaser with himself present in the scene to set up the story, followed by two acts and a brief epilogue, where-

in he commented upon the story or character or theme. It was a fairly rigid structure to work within.

Each of my *Twilight Zone* scripts began with the question "What if. . .?"

In *A Penny for Your Thoughts*: What if a man could "overhear" the secret thoughts of others?

In *Nothing in the Dark*: What if death were a *person* come to take away one of the living?

In *A Game of Pool*: What if a man had to defeat the ghost of a dead champion in order to take his place?

In *Kick the Can*: What if a man could become young again through the magic of children's games?

Someone once said that, for the perfect accomplishment of any art, one must get the feeling of the *eternal present* in his bones. Television itself is always in the present tense; happening now. Matching television as an embod-

iment of the eternal now is the script; it is always written in the present tense, so that with each reading, its characters are reenergized into present-tense existence.

I have always used a somewhat chaotic method of writing. My system has served me well in the assemblage of the pages that constitute a script or a play or a story, as well as this article. I've studied myself as though I were a rat in a maze; I know how I work best. I reward myself for performance, trying to force myself to be creative on demand.

I can write best at night, after all the late talk shows are over and old movies are all that is left—or in the early part of the day, when my nerves are closest to the surface.

I like having a television and a hi-fi or radio on together, tuned low, one to talk and one to music. It may have



In *Kick the Can*, also written by Johnson, Ernest Truex portrayed a man convinced that people grow old when they stop playing children's games, and that playing them again will bring back lost youth. Gathering a group of old people on the lawn, he put his theory to the test.

something to do with the de-tuned crystal radios I listened to as a boy. The box would bring a faint voice from Clint, Texas across the Wyoming prairies, at the same time bleeding in a mariachi band from faraway Mexico. The blend soothes me as an alarm clock ticking in a boxful of puppies soothes them while the mother is away.

Tuned low, my electronic companions sometimes create a distant murmur to be ignored, sometimes a clear message from afar, depending upon how much attention I give to my writing. This comes out in bursts and spurts, disconnected and ready for the rewriter's scissors. I cut up and arrange and rearrange my bits of writing, and after a time I have a respectable bundle of papers clipped together that grows, by way of lists and diagrams and notes, into a rough draft. When cooled, this draft will reveal glaring weaknesses, which can be removed in the rewrite.

I may go through this process a half-dozen times, each time promising myself that this will be the *final* draft. Of course, I don't really believe the promise, but I'll use anything to get on down the line to some state of completion. I mentally cling to any signpost along the way for support—a scene finally written, an act completed—because I have taken someone's money, signed a contract, and given my work. So I must do it somehow. Each day, except Saturday, becomes a grueling obstacle course. I force my mind to dwell on the same baffling subject, so that it can be thought through while I try to make a written record of the pro-

cess. I am good at forgetting—or perhaps I mean ignoring. In fashioning a story I often go astray. I must effectively forget each version so I can visualize a different version. It is a valuable quality while writing, and perhaps it helps me not to see how broke we are getting while I shuffle my bits of paper, seeking perfection.

A general theory of creativity holds that necessity is the mother of invention, or that the wolf at the door is the only begetter. To become creative, I place myself in a position where it is absolutely necessary—for my sake and for others'—that I find a way. It is the same process a prisoner must feel as he eyes his cell for a way out, almost at once discounting the doors and windows because they are the most impregnable.

A basic problem for me is that I've got to write the end before I know what the beginning will be, and I have to write the beginning so that I will have a place to wind up at. It is a familiar problem to a writer.

To try to keep track, I talk a lot, telling my ideas to others to see what kinds of reflections I get back, trying to find new ways to tell them so that, perhaps, in the hurtling stride of impromptu storytelling, I will get a clearer vision or perceive new possibilities for another twist or angle to my notion.

I drink a lot of strong espresso coffee. I don't really like the stuff, but the effect of being wired on caffeine is to raise my mental quickness and reaction time. I go on binges of overeating and

oversleeping, trying to hold the glut-tony to one meal a day and trying to solve the story problems in the nightmare terrain of my dreams.

I do a lot of freeway driving, with no need to watch the off-ramps. I take lots of showers. I garden. I walk, trying to get the animal busy so it won't pester me for attention while my mind day-dreams without interruption.

I get on a neatness kick and begin straightening things. The house and all its furnishings become one vast geometry problem for me to solve.

I run from work for hours at a stretch, telling myself to "take time," knowing that trying to write by the seat of the pants just adds pages to the confusion that will have to be sorted out and rearranged until the hidden truth emerges and the gaps that will need filling come into view.

In spite of this, the mind continues its search, reexamining all existence, dredging up every memory, however faintly related to the larger question, while I sporadically write myself notes on what to remember when the actual writing takes place.

Even as I go, the ideas grow stale, so I must look at them from another perspective, adding a new concept, changing an element, and all the while reading the best works of others to remind me what good prose, pacing, dialogue, and thinking is, and hardly writing a page without first becoming excited enough so that when I get to the typewriter I feel like ending every sentence with an exclamation mark!

I can waste most of the day mooching from one part of my home to another reading, smoking, drinking coffee, wandering in the garden, listening to the radio, peering out of the window before I even get the lights on in my workroom while I try to raise my mind and body to the same state of clarity it was in on the previous day, maintaining a mental state for weeks, months or, if necessary, years, in order to keep the same tone throughout the work. And if I cannot maintain it every day, then I write on those days when I can rise to it.

I act on impulse whenever I can so that the energy and excitement will carry over into the writing.

I've tried deliberately becoming exhausted without sleep to see if I can get a second wind mentally and to see if I could work that way.

And as deadlines threaten, I often

go sleepless, or so sleepful that I am stupified as I increase the pressure on myself, hoping to distill that one pure drop of unity—an idea or the idea out of an elaboration of ideas that will be an original contribution to the collective unconsciousness.

To go through this and to accomplish anything good, the writer must love what he is a part of and be a sucker for a good story. I have long had a love affair with fantasy. Of all story forms, it requires most of all that the story be about something—the nature of grief, the potential of man. Stories about metallic robots turn out to be about men. Stories

The hardest part is getting the job. No matter how many credits you have, you find that each time is just as difficult. If you have a good track record, a well-connected agent, or lots of brass, you can sometimes get an appointment with the producer or his man, the story editor, both of whom are subject to the tight control (censorship) of the network. It is not at this hazardous first “meeting” or story conference that you get the assignment, even if you are a seasoned veteran. That approval may not come until the third, fourth, or fifth meeting, so part of your concern is surviving to the next meeting, and the next.

Writing for television has certain advantages—independence, and your name in the paper—but mainly it's a grungy job filled with anticlimaxes. By the time the show is aired, the money is long gone and the memory of writing it has dimmed. The name flashes on the screen and is gone, often into oblivion.

about magical powers turn out to be about those who unleash them. The story-answer to the question “What if...?” must be philosophically meaningful. These bits of synthetic experience can evoke profound human emotions, invading the deepest dimensions of the heart. In natural philosophy, appealing as it does to the will rather than to the intellect, one does not prove each point. The proof is implicit within the context: the rich textural weave of events, states of mind, actions, motives, and statements. One goes along with it or one does not. It “feels right” or it doesn’t.

Writing for television has certain advantages—independence, and your name in the paper—but mainly it's a grungy job filled with anticlimaxes. When you turn in the script, you have to wait for the check. By the time the show is aired, the money is long gone and the memory of writing it has dimmed. The name flashes on the screen and is gone, often into oblivion, and every job is a new audition of your act.

The way you do this is by slowly overcoming the story editor. It is good if he never becomes aware that this is happening. It is a form of subtle, friendly, zen intimidation that begins when you are ushered into a glistening tower office or a shabby bungalow to sit facing a man who may have heard of you, but probably doesn't even know your name. The trick here is to dazzle him with the telling of your ideas. In the telling, you must use all your verbal skill and your knowledge of the world of television as applied to his show, while at the same time conveying your assurance that you will get the job and your belief that you can write the script.

To prepare for these “performances,” I tell my ideas to as many people as I can before I write them down, altering my act from telling to telling, sensing the goosebumps on my own flesh and watching those I talk to for a momentary flagging of attention that will tell me I've lost them at some point in the telling. In order to have listeners, I had to become an enter-

taining storyteller. When you write out loud, it must be good writing or you will soon find yourself alone.

If you are a writer, the craft of putting all this down on paper can be picked up by reading a few scripts, watching to see how the trick is done. Attempt to match the amount of space used to describe something with the amount of screen time it will take to show it. Each page is roughly one minute; action takes longer than dialogue. The script is made up of numbered shots which compose into scenes, so that the parts can be filmed out of order and assembled later. I sometimes use scissors and a stapler to avoid retyping usable pieces of manuscript in early drafts; they can be manipulated much as a film editor manipulates lengths of film to achieve compression, velocity, and mystery. The story must sell itself to the producer before the decision to go to film can be made—or the writer can be paid.

Scripts come hard. Story conferences transpire, accommodations are made with others, draft after draft is written, story-edited, and rewritten. There are fights. There is love and hate. There is a lot of time spent in front of a typewriter. There are agents and screenings and appointments and rejections. There is much jockeying for power between collaborators; there is much wide-eyed sweating in the night when the ideas won't come and deadlines loom, for you learn early that there's no sense pounding the keys until you know what to write. And hovering over this process is the pressure of others who can't get into action without the script: producers, directors, actors, casting, lighting, sound, wardrobe, makeup, editing, scoring, carpenters, painters, draftsmen, all poised, ready to go, needing only the script to galvanize them into fevered labor, while, alone in a room with a headful of ideas from everyone, the writer figures out, spells out, and diagrams the intricate plan that will tell everyone what he must do, compressed into a document of a prescribed length that strives to achieve literary power while at the same time serves as a blueprint.

It is a grand game, filled with tension and excitement. There is little body contact in the game, but it is rich with brutal encounters of the mind and spirit. 17

Hollywood Cries Wolf!



ROBERT MARTIN SURVEYS THE NEW PACK OF WEREWOLF FILMS AND TALKS TO THREE INNOVATIVE YOUNG DIRECTORS.

1981 has proved to be Hollywood's Year of the Wolf. Though it's been two decades since the last major werewolf film was made—1961's *Curse of the Werewolf*, with Oliver Reed in the title role—by the end of this summer we will have seen, in wide release, no less than three major films on this theme: *The Howling*, *The Wolfen*, and *An American Werewolf in London*. All three were directed by men still in their thirties, and all three take a fresh look at this most ancient of monsters.

Joe Dante and *The Howling*

"It may seem hard to believe, but all of these films seem to have been arrived at independently," says director Joe Dante, whose film *The Howling* was the first in the current wave to reach the screen. "None that I know of were conceived for the purposes of ripping off another film, unlike the maniac pictures that came in the wake of *Halloween*—of which there must be ten unreleased pictures that are going to just drop dead at the box office, so far as I can tell.

"I think that the people behind the werewolf films arrived at the conclusion that there was just no place to go with the man-with-a-knife movies. Even the crassest producer has got to realize, eventually, that you can't keep making the same movie over and over and still have it work. The only thing to do was to go back to the fantasy element—which was what drew people to horror movies in the first place. Moreover, the idea of a shape-shifting creature is not as negative as the idea of dismembering people. The audience's quest for spectacle can be channeled in a positive direction, so you can go to movies and still see a lot of neat things that don't necessarily include heads bouncing down the stairs."

Dante chose to defuse comparisons between his werewolves and the powerful image of Lon Chaney, Jr., by incorporating clips from 1941's *The Wolf-Man* into his

picture. "We used the clips to connect with the audience—to make the characters' reactions, and their belief in werewolves, a lot less silly. The reference alone does a lot toward stretching the audience's willingness to accept an admittedly ridiculous plot."

The plot Dante refers to was first established by Gary Brandner's paperback novel *The Howling*, more or less a *'Salem's Lot* with werewolves. Two radically different scripts were written and rejected before Dante called in John Sayles, whose genre credentials include scripts for such diverse fare as *Battle Beyond the Stars*, *Alligator*, and Dante's earlier film, *Pirhana*. (He is also known as a director in his own right—*Return of the Secaucus Seven*—and, in the National Book Award nominee *Union Dues*, as a mainstream novelist.) With Dante's encouragement, Sayles wrote a script that trod the thin line between horror and parody. The action was transferred from a werewolf-infested town to an Esalen-type institute with similar problems.

"It called for humor in terms of the situations and material with which we were working," says Dante, "which is not to say that you couldn't make a serious werewolf picture today, only that I don't think you could ever make a serious werewolf picture with this plot. Most everything we did to change it was an improvement, but we were still dealing with an extremely hokey situation. The more pretentiously you treat it, the more you're inviting laughter. But we were very serious about making it the best picture we could under the given circumstances."

Luckily, circumstances brought Dante a very talented effects man in the shape of twenty-one-year-old Rob Bottin, who created a transformation effect unlike any seen before: a series of masks, each equipped to change on-screen, eliminating the lap dissolves that have been the staple of werewolf films since the genre was created. "It's a

tremendous dramatic device," says Dante, "now that the technology has gotten to the point where you can actually depict that sort of thing. For instance, in the remake of *The Thing*, they can now actually make the creature as a shape-shifter—which was what it was in the original John Campbell story. What you're going to see in the future will be many special effects films, each of which is going to try to top the other."

Michael Wadleigh and *The Wolfen*

In the summer of 1978, when *The Howling* first climbed the paperback bestseller lists, another wolf-themed novel made its first appearance and proved equally popular: Whitley Streiber's *The Wolfen*, which, set in New York, concerned a slum precinct secretly harboring a race of superintelligent wolves.

Until *The Wolfen*, Michael Wadleigh's sole claim to fame was his documentary feature *Woodstock*, though he has continued to pursue a film career in the eleven years since its release. Part of Wadleigh's slow start is no doubt due to the fact that he has spent the greater part of his time since 1970 living among the Indians of Wyoming, content to make an occasional documentary on modern-day Indian life-styles and to write several film scripts, none of which have yet received the go-ahead from any major studio. But in early 1978, Wadleigh was contacted by the executive offices of Orion Pictures.

"They sent me a number of projects," says Wadleigh, "and among them was Whitley Streiber's book, in galley form. I liked the basic premise very much; but what I really liked was Whitley's creation of a wolf-race, though I changed them considerably. And the book had no Indians, which we added to the film—partially because wolves can't speak, and the Indians provide a perfect sort of alter ego for the wolves."

Of all the current films, Wadleigh's draws most heavily upon real werewolf lore—that of the American Indian. To the Indian, the werewolf was not a raging wolf-man; it was, instead, a divine wolf-god that, like all of nature, has a hand in man's fate. "Our werewolf tradition arose out of a European farming tradition," says Wadleigh, "and the conceit of European man that he is the ruling creature on the planet, that all animals are inferior. Most of the peoples on the earth don't feel that way."

"In a relatively new science called sociobiology, which compares the social behavior of human beings with the social behavior of animals, among the favorite groups for study are wolves and Indians, and it's been discovered that they are organized in an amazingly similar fashion—in their manner of hunting and fishing, and the way they organize their tribes. The divisions between animal and man are not so well-defined as many believe; Indians and wolves have more in common than Indians and Europeans."

"So when the first farmers came to America, they often used similar terms for Indians and wolves—they both had to be cleared out of there. *The Wolfen* opens with a prologue set in Dutch Manhattan in the seventeenth century, when the first farmers met the first Indians and wolves; and it deals throughout with Indian and wolf mythology, their common bonds and symbiotic relationship. The villain of the piece is the white man; the sympathetic characters are the Indians and the wolves."

In his original treatment and in the script, which he



The Howling reaches an early climax when Bill Neill (Christopher Stone) undergoes a transformation—along with his partner—during sex at a California resort.



Searching through the resort's files, Terry Fisher (Belinda Balaski) is interrupted by a former "patient."



While director Joe Dante looks on, effects man Rob Bottin engineers an early stage of the film's principal transformation.

co-wrote with David Eyre, Wadleigh also changed Streiber's basic vision of the wolves "from monsters, with prehensile limbs and hideously ugly heads, into beautiful creatures."

"I also changed the way the existence of the *Wolfen* becomes known. In the book, they are first heard from when they attack and kill a cop. That didn't seem to me a



In *The Wolfen*, the pack uses an abandoned church in New York's South Bronx as one of its lairs.

sufficiently momentous act for their first appearance in the film. I wanted it to create a situation that would threaten the very existence of the *Wolfen*, and that would be a very calculated, deliberate move. So the murder that sets events in motion is that of one of the wealthiest men in America, whose ancestor built the country's first windmill—the very beginning of American industry, foretelling the doom of wolves and Indians alike—and which is featured in the film's prologue. When we cut to modern times, VanderVere, direct heir to the original Dutch fortune, has just erected a replica of that first windmill in Battery Park. In the middle of a full-moon night he's killed—under extremely mysterious circumstances. His throat is torn out; his skull has been cracked open and his brain removed. In come the police, and the immediate assumption is political terrorism.

"It is a very sophisticated piece. Albert Finney came out of virtual retirement for this, simply because the lead is a very intelligent detective role. Just as Ahab becomes obsessed with the idea of the white whale and comes to think of it as the source of all evil, Finney's character arrives at that attitude toward the wolves—which have, for a long time, been a symbol of all that is evil to European man."

Effects are, again, an important part of *The Wolfen*. Actual wolves were used in much footage (a factor that made it a very difficult film to shoot), but the attacks on the actors were made by wolf-puppets built by Carl Fullerton. In order to portray the *Wolfen* point-of-view as described in Streiber's novel, ultraviolet film enhanced by optical effects was used, in a process Orion dubbed "Alienvision."

John Landis and *An American Werewolf in London*

John Landis, who made an art of excess with *Animal House* and *The Blues Brothers*, first fell in love with moviemaking at the age of eight, when he saw Ray Harryhausen's *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad*. From that day on, he had the moviemaker's calling. At sixteen, legally able to quit school, he did so and started working in the mailroom at Twentieth Century-Fox.

"I did everything I could, made every possible contact," says Landis. The most valuable contact proved to be Andrew Marton, a director whose credits include work on *The Longest Day* and *King Solomon's Mines*. When assigned as second unit director on the war film *Kelly's Heroes* in 1969, Marton tried his best to get a location job for the ambitious mailroom boy, to no avail. Undaunted, Landis told his mother that he'd gotten the job (she didn't believe him) and secretly withdrew his life savings—about six hundred dollars—to buy a one-way ticket to London. From there he intended to hitchhike his way across Europe to Yugoslavia, where the film was being shot.

Upon arriving at his destination, Landis was hired as a "go-fer" and, to his good fortune, the production was



Wolfen-eye-view of Detective Dewey Wilson (Albert Finney), assigned to investigate a series of bizarre and brutal murders.



Wall Street is the scene of an even stranger death when the city's chief of detectives is decapitated just before Wilson's final confrontation with the wolf pack.



Director Michael Wadleigh, in his first feature since *Woodstock*, confers with Finney on the set.

troubled enough for him to expand his duties considerably. The job became his real start in film, but more important to the subject at hand is an incident that occurred in the course of his travels.

"I'd been writing scripts since I was eight," Landis recalls, "but the first seed of this idea came to me while I was on the road between Belgrade and Novi Sad, as we were driving toward home. I saw a group of peasants burying a wooden coffin right in the middle of the crossroads. There was no gravestone or anything, and there were about six priests present. What it turned out to be was the body of a rapist, and they were burying it at the crossroads in an



In *An American Werewolf in London*, David (David Naughton, late of TV's Dr. Pepper ads) is reunited with his dead friend Jack (Griffin Dunne).



Another nightmare figure appears in Nazi uniform with a grotesque wolflike skull.

unmarked grave so the body wouldn't rise.

"That set me to thinking about doing something supernatural in a modern setting—not with peasants, or in any sort of fantasy setting, but totally in our reality, now—and having intelligent, sophisticated people experience something that's impossible."

Deciding that werewolves were impossible enough for his purposes, Landis set to work on the tale of two young American college boys, David and Jack (played by David Naughton and Griffin Dunne in the film), who confront ultimate terror on the English moors. Three weeks later, David wakes in a London hospital. Jack is dead, his body torn beyond recognition. As he recovers under the ministrations of a beautiful nurse (Jenny Agutter), David knows that something is terribly wrong. When he learns the truth, it comes from the lips of Jack, his very dead friend.

The plot, says Landis, has been altered little since the script was written when he was nineteen. "I did change a lot of the dialogue, because words change. And since it's set in modern London, there are punks in it now. But there's been no changes in its themes or its approach."

"It is extremely graphic in its violence. The word that best describes it is 'unrelenting.' It has complete integrity in its treatment of its subject—straightforward, no bullshit. The horror is horrific, and some of the physical violence is very explicit. The emotional violence is just as explicit. This is an extremely uncompromising piece, essentially a tragedy about some very attractive, sympathetic people that you will know are dead from the very first frame."

Unlike a great many other fantasy films, *American Werewolf* did not undergo a last-minute search for the proper effects talent needed to make its nightmarish dreams a reality. Ten years ago, Landis and special-effects genius Rick Baker joined forces for Landis's first feature, a terror-film parody called *Schlock*, which starred Landis in a Baker-designed ape-suit. (Since that time, Baker has worn his own ape-suits very convincingly in the *King Kong* remake and in *The Incredible Shrinking Woman*.) Landis told Baker about his dream project, the ultimate werewolf movie, and Baker agreed to be a part of it. Through ten years and seven fruitless studio options, the pair remained certain that someday the picture would be made. Baker started actual work on the picture a little less than a year ago, but that work is the culmination of a decade of rumination and planning.

The werewolf itself, Baker's chief task, is even further removed from the Chaney tradition than Rob Bottin's creature in *The Howling*. "It's a four-legged beast," says Landis, "a real hell-hound demon-wolf, unlike anything seen



Werewolf director John Landis has promised an unusual mixture of laughter and shocks.

before. And there will be a full-body transformation of one of the leads. The character played by Griffin Dunne, though dead, plays a major part. He reappears three times, feeling fine but looking rather grisly. Each time, he's been dead longer. The first two times are extraordinary makeups, but the third time... All I can say is that, traditionally, makeup has to be built up on an actor's face. On this, we had to sculpt down to the skull. We've already filmed it, so I can confidently tell you that there's something that Rick's invented which is totally unbelievable. There's also a whole bunch of monsters in the film. David has a series of nightmares that are inhabited by some very unpleasant demons. And for the gore fans, there's an awful lot of grisly victims. Werewolves don't bite people on the neck, they tend to rip them to pieces. We didn't compromise on that."

Despite the ghastly panorama Landis describes, the film will not lack humor—for some. "I expect fights in the theater," says Landis, "because there are things that will strike some people as extremely funny that will be very, very disturbing for others." A believable assertion, since *The Blues Brothers* started more than one argument about the amount of humor in a twenty-car collision. This combination of humor and unrelenting terror in *American Werewolf* is what delayed its production for so long. "People who read it either said it's too funny to be scary, or it's too scary to be funny," says the director. "But then, Hitchcock always called *Psycho* a comedy."

In sum, it looks like a good year for furry folk of all shapes and sizes. By September, if we should live, the Chaney image might seem a little more removed from us in time and in place; the technicolor nightmare that replaces him is with us today. **17**



*Footfalls echo in the memory
Down the passage which we did not take
Towards the door we never opened
Into the rose-garden. My words echo
Thus, in your mind.*

*But to what purpose
Disturbing the dust on a bowl of rose-leaves
I do not know.*

*Other echoes
Inhabit the garden. Shall we follow?
Quick, said the bird, find them, find them,
Round the corner. Through the first gate,
Into our first world, shall we follow
The deception of the thrush? Into our first world.
There they were, dignified, invisible,
Moving without pressure, over the dead leaves,
In the autumn heat, through the vibrant air,
And the bird called, in response to*

*The unheard music hidden in the shrubbery. . .
Dry the pool, dry concrete, brown edged,
And the pool was filled with water out of sunlight,
And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly,
The surface glittered out of heart of light,
And they were behind us, reflected in the pool.
Then a cloud passed, and the pool was empty.
Go, said the bird, for the leaves were full
of children,
Hidden excitedly, containing laughter.
Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind
Cannot bear very much reality.*

*Sudden in a shaft of sunlight
Even while the dust moves
There rises the hidden laughter
Of children in the foliage
Quick now, here, now, always. . .*



The Hidden Laughter

by David Morrell

HIS WIFE HAD VANISHED, BEYOND ALL REASON, BEYOND ALL UNDERSTANDING. AND PERHAPS THE ONLY CLUE LAY IN THE LINES OF A POEM.

Those lines from Eliot still haunt me, even though it has been years since I first read them: *unheard music, leaves full of children, hidden excitedly, containing laughter*. I have heard that music, almost seen those children—not in leaves, it turns out; in a house, though, where I used to live... except that all this was so long ago that now I think of “I” as “he” and how he turned to see her walking toward him. She was looking very puzzled. “Something’s funny at the house we sold,” she told him. “All the neighbors say that there are children inside laughing.”

What was odd, of course, was that he’d locked

it when they’d moved out; and besides, there were few children in that neighborhood, all of them accounted for. “I think I’d better look.” She had a key, you see, until the new folks came to take possession, just in case some trouble happened in the meantime; and she loved that house, the one that she’d been married in, and was going back to take a final look. He didn’t think she ought to, but he couldn’t talk her out of it. Since he was working on some bookshelves, he told her that he’d wait to hear about the laughter, which he knew would be imaginary. So she left... and that’s the last he ever saw of her.

This happened in the morning. He postponed

**He thought,
too late,
that he had climbed
around up there
without first looking
for disturbance
in the dust.
Now, his pants all dirty,
smudge marks where he'd
knelt among the rafters,
he could never tell
if someone
had preceded him.**

his lunch and waited for her. Finally he ate. He figured she was visiting some old friends in that neighborhood, and after all, the kind of marriage that they had, they both were free and easy, so he didn't worry. Then the evening came, and it was time for supper. Still she didn't come, and now he did begin to worry. When he made a meal and fed his children, he began to phone, but no one at that neighborhood had seen her. Not since lunch, at least.

She'd checked the house and, as he had expected, there was nothing. Then she'd visited some friends, again as he'd expected. After lunch she'd gone back to the house, just to see it one last time, and people in the neighborhood had gone on with their business. But yes, wait a minute, yes, her car was still parked in the driveway down there, and she must be with some other friends. He finished with his calls, though, and he learned that no one else had seen her, and he worried even more. He thought she'd maybe had some trouble with the car and left it. But she would have phoned him then. That much was certain. When he got a sitter for the children, he drove back to take a look.

The place was much the same as he had left it. Oh, the grass was somewhat high, the shrubs in need of some slight trimming, but except for that and dust upon the outside windows, it looked just as if they yet were living there. The drapes had stayed, and they were closed, and as he stood out on the curb and looked at everything, he had a certain yearning: for his youth, for the days when he and she were just beginning.

Don't mistake. The place was not impressive. Oh, acceptable but nothing more. A single-story

ranch house with a maple tree, a long-since split and stunted plum tree, and an overhang that served to form a porch. What they used to call low-income housing when a house was something which ambitious, saving people could afford. A lot of things had changed since then, more money and more complications, and that moment, as he stood there, watching, brought back memories of early days and innocence.

He walked up toward it, and of course the door was locked. That was exactly like her. She had felt so close to all the house had meant to her that she would never leave it unsecured. He had a key as well, though, and he turned it, going in. There was an echo off the bare walls and the floor. The cabinets they'd built, the wood floors they'd varnished, these brought back a sequence of quick images, the two of them together as they began to build their lives.

He waited, and he listened.

"Honey?"

But he really didn't think there'd be an answer. He walked through the living room to reach the kitchen, looking for some sign that she had been there. But the kitchen was the way it should be, and he walked now to the stairs down to the basement. Maybe she had fallen. When he took a breath and swung the door to look down, though, the floor below was silent, and he almost didn't go down, but he knew he should be thorough. So he checked the basement, even looked behind the furnace and the washer and the dryer they had sold. He glanced inside the crawl-space. Then he came upstairs and checked the cupboards and the closets, all the bedrooms and the bathroom, but he didn't see a sign of her; and now he didn't know what else to do. He almost went back to the front door before thinking of the attic—and for reasons that he didn't understand, he had a sudden chill.

At first he just dismissed it. Then he thought that she would have had no reason to go up there, and he almost left the house. But he had been determined to be thorough, and he knew that this incompleteness would soon nag him; so he walked back to the hallway, moving toward the trapdoor. When he stretched, he barely touched the ring, but then he had it, and he pulled down, and the fold-out steps came down to reach the floor. He waited just a moment longer. There was something like the *coo-coo-coo* of pigeons up there, one on top of the other, faint and soft and gentle, and it sounds just enough like laughter that he guessed this maybe was that people had been hearing. Not exactly laughter, more like giggling. *Coo-coo-coo*.

And then it stopped.

Of course. Some birds had gotten in there, and they'd heard him, going silent. She had gone up there to look, and maybe she was hurt. He didn't think, till later, that the trapdoor



would have been open if she had. He only knew he had to look, and quickly; so he scrambled up; and there was nothing. Insulation, cobwebs, wiring. But no sign of her, no birds, no laughter, nothing.

There was must all through the close, stale air. He was checking in the corners, sweating, and yet he made out no sign of her. He thought, too late, that he had climbed around up there without first looking for disturbance in the dust. Now, his pants all dirty, smudge marks where he'd knelt among the rafters, he could never tell if someone had preceded him. He listened for the cooing, looking for some explanation. When the sweat became too much for him, he found that he was leaving.

Outside, he was puzzled, checking with the neighbors once again, but still no one had seen her. There had been a man she'd talked to. Someone now remembered that. But everyone was certain that, by herself, she'd gone once more into the house.

He walked back, looking. Then he asked if he could use a neighbor's phone. He called some other friends. He called the hospital and, on impulse, the police.

No help, no sign of her. And since there was no evidence of something wrong, he learned that no policemen would be coming out. "Just give her time, and she'll be back."

He left the neighbors, walking toward the house. But this time, when he stood out there and looked at it, the dusk now gray around it, he was conscious of a sound—no, something less than that, something on the other side of hearing, more a *presence* than a sound; and it was coming from the house.

He took a step. The thing subsided. Then it came back, closer, stronger. He could almost touch it, hear it, and he kept on walking toward the house. Music, unseen, unheard, faint and tinkling, merry, far away, yet close, and he was walking. When he reached the door, he recognized the *coo-coo-coo*, and yes, he did hear laughter, children's laughter, but he burst in, and the house was dark, and there was no one. All the laughter stopped together, though it hadn't really been there. Perhaps it had been all in his imagination.

He has heard it many times since then, however, and he comes back often, just to stand and wait and let it happen—so much so that now he owns the place again. He lives there with his children, though they by and large do not remember her. The years have led them forward. Flashes now and then, but little recollection; and he asks them, but they do not hear the laughter.

And the answer? The police at first suspected that he'd killed her; but they found no body, and he managed to convince them of his innocence. He seldom argued with her, always seemed to like her, and besides, there was no other woman, no insurance, as a motive.

Still, he often wonders. With this tendency of his to be both "I" and "he," in past and present, he could maybe have a double personality. He could have killed her and, as someone else, he never would have known about it . . . though he yet can find no reason why he would have.

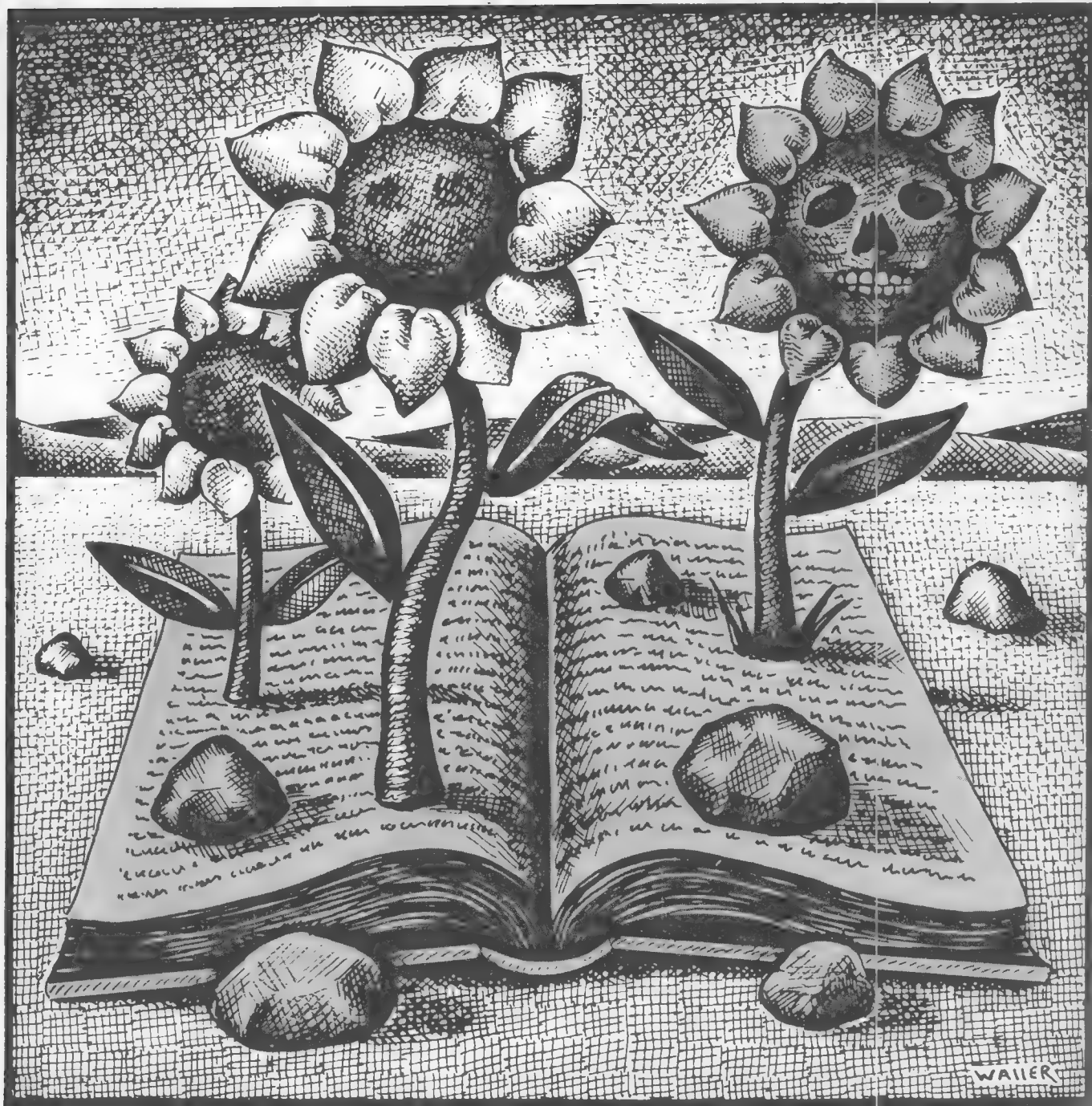
All right, she was kidnapped. But there never was a ransom note; and anyway, his mind cannot sustain the thought of what a kidnapper who left no note would do to her.

Imagining his wife alone and trembling, he yet hopes that she will one day come back home to him. He even hopes—though this would normally be painful—that she has only gone away and left him; that the changes they'd been going through weren't half so good as when they first had started; that the man who someone might have seen her with was, in fact, a secret friend who led her to another life.

He wishes and he grieves and, in his constant emptiness, imagines that she yet is with him, all around him, that she never went away but only back.

To where? he asks himself, and answers: *To her youth, her innocence.*

His theory is fantastic, though consoling: that in every person's life there is a place which one can fall through, even by choice slip through, that she lives now with the laughter in a better time and space; and sometimes he can hear a woman in among the children's laughter, playing games, perhaps, or just enjoying, bringing home to him those words from Eliot again. What might have been. What has been. My words echo with the laughter. 17



THE ARTISAN

by Lori Allen

THE POEMS WERE HIS, THE FLOWERS HERS—
AND WASN'T THAT A DISTINCTION WORTH DYING FOR?

He couldn't have been more than thirty. His face seemed almost innocent, with thick features that heavy drinking would have turned coarse by now. A nice young man. Cora was sure she could make him understand.

"I don't need a sewer," she explained patiently, smoothing her hair to be sure it was tucked into her braid. "There's just me in the house now, except when the children come to visit. Even if their father does

come back after all these years, I'm sure the leeching fields can take care of two old people like us."

"That ain't the point, ma'am. When the sewer comes through, everybody on the line's gotta hook up. That's the law."

"Well, then, the law should be changed."

"Yes, ma'am. You planning on filing a suit?"

Cora sighed and shook her head. Lawyers, courts—she could do without those.

On the road, on a direct line from her septic tank, someone had painted a blue X inside a circle. "I suppose you're going to have to go straight through my rock garden," she said, noting that it was in the way.

"Afraid so, ma'am. Seems a shame, though, you keep it up so nice. We drive by once in a while just to look at it. My wife, she says your pansies are always the first to sprout. I know for a fact that no one has Joseph's coats like yours. I guess they call them coleus around here, but I kind of like the old names."

A nice young man.

The first day Cora had worked in the garden, it had been so overgrown with weeds and bramble it could hardly be called a garden at all.

It was morning, so Mark was sleeping, the dark late sleep that is so easily disturbed. Cora had hushed the children off to school. Not daring to wake him by fumbling in the bedroom closet, she had gone out front in her slippers, drawing her belt tightly across her waist so her robe wouldn't fall open.

It was the rock garden that had originally attracted her to this house instead of to the more modern ranches hunched together down the road. She liked the feeling of solidity and permanence the gray stones gave, raising the slope into a step and leveling it off, a foothold for giants. She also liked the stone wall in the backyard—the real kind of stone wall, not mortared for decoration, but built by necessity when farmers two hundred years back had to have someplace to put the rocks they cleared from their field, and incidentally making something that gave pleasure to look at.

She worked an hour or more in the moist soil, pulling out rich-smelling clumps of weeds and laying them in the huge silver saucer her kids used for winter sledding. There were stones inside the garden's built-up perimeter—too many to have come there naturally. As she pulled chickweed after dandelion, she noticed that the stones were thicker in some places than others, and wondered if there might be a pattern within the undergrowth.

But her back hurt, the dirt had gone into her slippers, her nails were cracked, and passersby might think it strange to see their new neighbor gardening in her bathrobe, so she didn't mind as much as she might have when Mark called, demanding his breakfast.

It was not going to be one of his better days. The writing had not gone well the night before. He had woken up complaining about a lack of subject matter, cursing Frost for having beaten him to the stone wall. "Something there is that doesn't love a wall," he had ranted. "God, how I hate that man!"

Cora never knew what to do at these times. Anything she said seemed to make him angrier; anything she did threatened to make him explode. She turned his bacon with exquisite care, poking out the blisters with a fork.

Afterwards she went out into the garden, dressed for the work in jeans, sneakers, and cotton gloves with plastic inserts to protect the palms of her hands. She tied her hair (poets' wives always have long hair) back into a single braid and took three sections of the *Sunday Times* for a kneeling pad.

Her hands pulled, reaching deep in the soil, dislodging grubs, worms, and a strange spider that carried a white sac wherever it went.

Gradually her mind disassociated itself, as it often did when her hands were busy. She thought of things her husband would have laughed at. How pretty the red ants were. How lovely the dandelion. Seeds, and rebirth. Death, and was it really killing when you squished a bug? God. Heritage—hers to receive, hers to give. Love. Duty. All the things that had been subjects of countless poems before, therefore too unoriginal, too banal to rethink in Mark's house.

Yet here, in the rock garden on which Mark had no claim, Cora felt free to imagine worlds within worlds within worlds.

When Cora got up the next morning to get the children's breakfast, Mark's ashtrays were empty, his shot glass and tumbler were stacked in the washer, his books had been returned to their shelves in alphabetical order, and his wine-stained shirt was soaking in her second-best mixing bowl. She had been sleepwalking again, putting things to rights in the small hours she could never remember.

It had been happening more often than not lately. And to hear Mark tell it, not only did she walk, but she was capable of carrying on a conversation—an *intelligent* conversation, he pointed out. Once, he claimed, she had danced—her hair loose, her body naked—danced for him a pagan ritual that could only have one ending.

Cora often wondered at the nighttime self, that person capable of knowing what she wanted to do, and of doing it. Such a person might have the courage to call a lawyer, arrange for a divorce . . . But no, the sleepwalking Cora was a phantom, Mark's vision, a poet's dream.

There were hard weeds and easy weeds. The easy weeds were mainly in the clear spaces, where growing things belonged. The others, where the stones were, were the dead spaces, from which every last bit of grass had to be uprooted. The stones themselves impeded her progress, laying a weight on the roots she tried to pull.



When she had succeeded in separating weed from stone, she was careful to shake the roots clean of soil in the clear spot, so that whatever stone pattern was arising would not be muddled. Nearby was a hose, so the more stubborn pieces could be soaked free.

The sun became hot, strong, almost a weapon, cleaving down on her skull, threatening to bake it. The only concession she made was to clip her braid up so it didn't tickle her neck.

Time slowed, or did it speed up, or did time not exist at all?

It seemed like a year passed while she was out there. A year without the hallmarks of holidays marred by arguments and accusations. Would Mark be home? Or would he have taken off on another "sabbatical" with another "graduate student"? A year without wondering what she would lose next. A year without winter. A good year. In *her* garden.

She would need more topsoil, she decided. Perhaps some bone meal. And she would have to do something about the unwanted growth between the pebbles in the dead space, or she'd never get around to weeding the flowers she intended to plant in the clear.

The stones, once the worst had been weeded out, proved to be in the shape of a rough X. Although she had never been there, Cora was brought to mind of Stonehenge, where she imagined thirteen X's marking sacrifices to some arcane god of order and peace.

She didn't go in until the kids came home, hushing their laughter so he couldn't hear.

She needn't have bothered. He was up and excited, with a mad look in his eye that made them all draw back.

"Do you realize what you've found out there?" he asked her, his thrusting hands opening an imaginary curtain on an imaginary stage. "A cross! A cross of stones in my own front yard! Cora, you are absolutely magnificent!"

He picked her up and swung her around like a trophy.

She was frightened. His manic times were invariably followed by depressions as deep as the mania had been high, and he was happier today than she had ever seen him.

"A cross of stones—what a poem that will make! It'll have to be a sestina—a sonnet—maybe a whole series of sonnets, ending with a crown—have I ever told you what a crown is?"

Afraid to say it's not a cross, afraid to stop him in his lecture lest she break the mood and make the depression come too fast, she listened one more time to the virtues of meter, the importance of rhyme, and how the last word of each line can pull the whole thing together.

The heavy work had put her into a sleep too deep for dreams, but not too solid for impressions. *Mine* was the general feeling she had, *my* dirt, *my* stones, *my* rocks . . . *my* spiders. She turned over, smiling in her sleep.

She heard a voice coming from far away. Her subconscious having filtered and rejected the possibility it was a child's voice, she closed the veil of her dream and tried to go back to her garden.

No luck. He was shaking her now, calling her name over and over like a hiccup.

"Cora, Cora, Cora, Cora . . ."

"Yes . . . yes. I'm awake. I think I'm awake. What time is it?"

"What time is it? She asks what time is it? It's time to celebrate my love! I have just written the finest poem of my career! I need an audience! Now! And I'm absolutely starved! Come make me something to eat while I read to you."

Cora got out of bed, still not sure whether she was awake or asleep. If she was awake, considering the day she had put in, her muscles should have been stiff and aching. But they weren't. They felt strangely loose and omnipotent, as in a flying dream.

She went to the kitchen, put butter in the frying pan and the frying pan on the stove to sizzle. She turned her chopping board to the vegetable side and with the well-honed blade recommended by her Oriental cookbook began slicing onions, celery, tomato, green pepper. She turned the board over to the meat side and did the ham. He always liked a Western in the middle of the night.

Poetry read aloud was just sound to her. She had to see the thing on paper before it made any sense. Still he insisted on reading it to her, sitting on his kitchen chair with his feet up on the table near the fruit bowl.

She vaguely pretended to understand.

When the omelet was just a little runny in the middle she put it on a plate, set the plate in front of him, supplied a fork and knife, found the fresh crackers, asked him if he wanted anything to drink. Only after she was absolutely sure he was satisfied did she

settle down in the chair opposite him and begin reading.

It was about her rock garden.

Well, she had been warned.

It described the poet's wife on her hands and knees, long days, the hot sun. It speculated how some other woman had laid the pattern she had found but, womanlike, had used only small stones, not large rocks, so that one season of neglect would obliterate the cross. It told about the poet's wife, endlessly weeding, year after year, until she grew too old. And how the poet and his children, on his wife's funeral day, would come, and mourn, and see if they could outline the shape.

The shape of the garden. The poet's garden. The poet's wife.

Where was Cora? Did nothing belong to her, not her garden, not her name? Was she no more than the poet's wife, sweating in the poet's garden, so that the poet might create something that served no other purpose than making a pretty sound? There was more to poetry than pretty sound, she knew. But not to his poetry.

Mark balanced the chair on its back legs, his features coarse in the harsh light. He was quite drunk, supremely confident of himself, with the deceptive shining such self-confidence brings.

He lit a cigarette, flicking the burnt match into his plate. "Be sure you call the man first thing in the morning," he told her.

"What man?"

"The landscape architect, the gardener, whichever."

"What do we need a gardener for?"

"What do we need a gardener for?" she asks! I'll tell you what we need a gardener for. It's poetry we're talking about, and poetry has to be done right. If I left it up to you, you'd put down something god-awful, like petunias. Imagine me writing a poem about petunias! I'd come out sounding more like Walt Disney than like Walt Whitman, which would be bad enough, I suppose." He clinched his cigarette into his plate, smashing it into what was left of the egg.

A landscape architect. A gardener.

The poet's wife, the useless creation of the artist's mind, watched her hand leave the side of her black transparent nightgown.

Watched her hand reach for the sharp Oriental knife.

Watched her hand . . .

Cora slept late. Where was Mark? He was always home at this time, unless . . . damn-it, was he off on another "sabbatical"?

She pulled on her jeans, deciding against the old plaid shirt with the frazzled elbows Mark hated.

Although he might be away for months, it was equally possible that he'd come home any minute, and she didn't want to make things any worse than they had to be.

Making her instant coffee, she wondered why her kitchen sparkled so. Outside of two juice glasses, two cereal bowls, and two spoons (the kids had apparently made their own breakfast), there was no clutter, no stain. It was as if the entire room had been scrubbed from ceiling to floor with antiseptic.

When she went outside, the grass was warm on top but moist underneath, providing a massage for her bare toes. She felt peculiarly light-headed, as though at an ending, or a beginning.

There was something different about her rock garden.

As she walked to investigate more closely, she saw that the stones in the X were gone, or perhaps there but buried, covered by large flat gray rocks that must have come from the back wall. Where the stones had given straight borders, the rocks gave scallops, but the pattern held clear.

Who had put the boulders there? Mark, in a grandiose gesture of consolation? Unlikely, Cora decided. She had probably done it herself, in the strength of the night.

She knelt on the cairn. It was high, and a little wobbly, but it would settle in time. Stones, and whatever else the rocks rested on, would sink deeply into the soil.

She began plotting her flowers—ageratum at the feet, a circle of bleeding hearts at each arm, and petunias over there, at the head.

The steam shovel was yellow and threatening as it began tearing up her yard, but the nice young man had a large sheet of paper on which he had carefully placed numbers to correspond to the green figures he had traced on each of the boulders.

"Now don't you worry, ma'am. We'll put everything back just like we found it."

The shovel took huge bites, cutting through topsoil and sand, scraping on the bedrock.

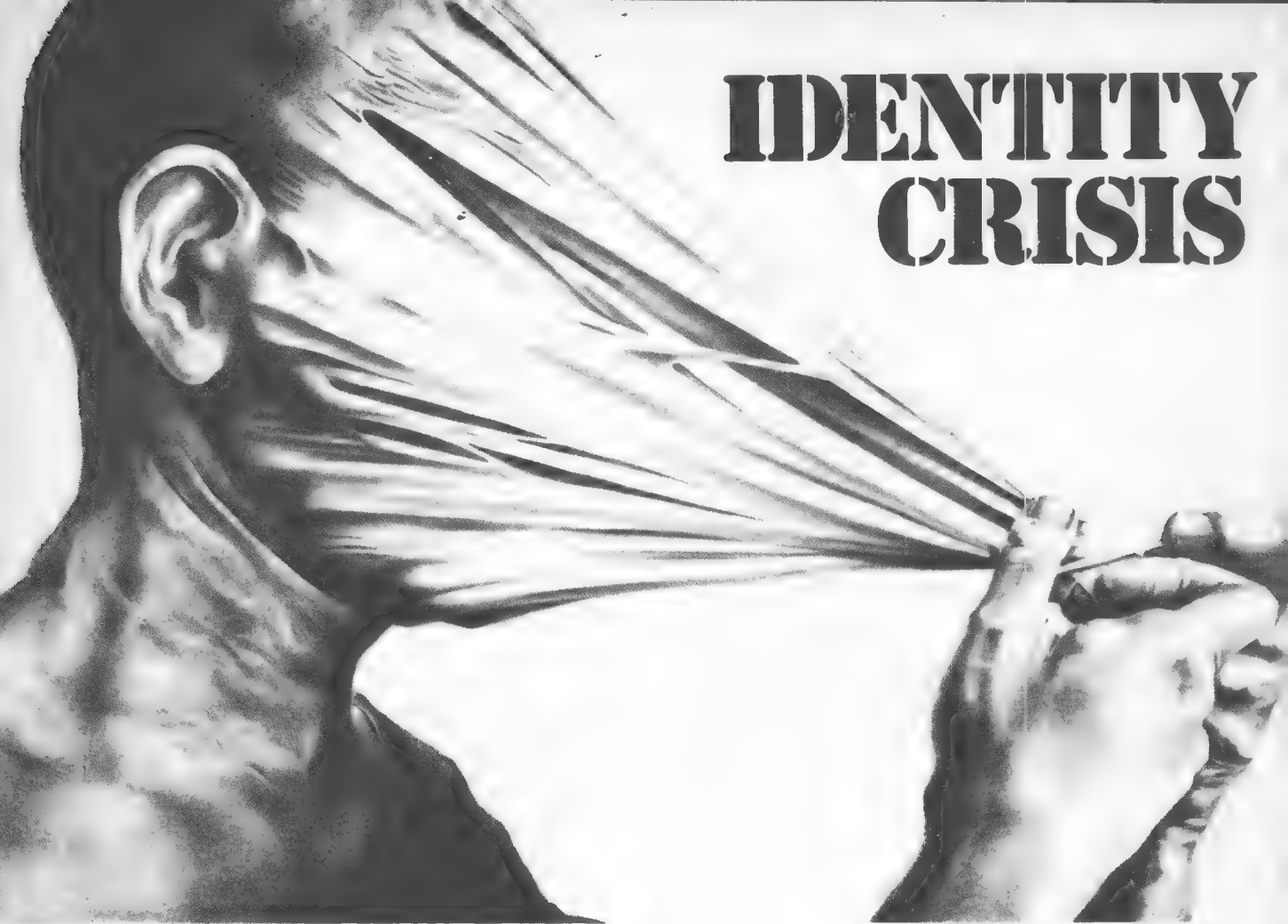
"Course, you're going to have to get new flowers—the county would have fits if they caught me gardening on their time."

The shovel neared the rock garden, dislodging a hidden spring.

"Flower time's got a sale on, they tell me. Do you like pinks? And . . . what are they called . . . Sweet William?"

The shovel lowered its scoop to the rock garden. In another moment the pattern would be ruined.

"You better go in the house now, ma'am. You don't want to watch this." 17



IDENTITY CRISIS

by James Patrick Kelly

IT ISN'T EASY, DEALING WITH FAME AND FORTUNE—
ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY'RE SOMEBODY ELSE'S!

The Wine Cellar singles bar had the interior decor of a nightmare. The air seemed equal parts cigarette smoke and vaporized sweat, churned up by a disco jackhammer. The tables around the dance floor were crammed together to promote claustrophobia. Tommy Cavanaugh wondered how he had let Ross talk him into coming.

"What about those two?" Ross was discreetly eyeing the action reflected by the mirror wall.

"Where?" Tommy sipped his screwdriver and peered over the rim of his glass.

"By the pool tables. The ones watching us."

"They're all watching us."

Ross gave him a withering look. "I'm going over."

"I'll stay here and save the table." Tommy watched enviously as his lithe friend threaded his way through the melee on the dance floor. He knew that although both he and Ross worked on Meat Street at Food City, only one of them looked like a butcher.

Tommy Cavanaugh was a short, thickset man of twenty-six. Tonight he was wearing chukka boots, black corduroy jeans, and a shirt that resembled an

explosion in a paint factory. He kept his head down to hide the fish-belly pallor of his chin and the tiny crescent-shaped scab near the corner of his mouth. That morning he had shaved a ten-month growth of beard—another good reason to have stayed home, he reminded himself. Tommy was not much of a womanizer, and his one claim to fame was that the Four Seasons Greeting Card Company had just bought two of his poems for thirty dollars. *Variations on the theme of Get Well Soon*, he thought sourly. *Who cares?* He drew a sad face in the sweat on his glass and wished that he were someone else.

A hand waved in front of his face. "Are we keeping you up, Tommy?" said the waitress. She had a lovely smile.

"Uh, yeah—I mean no." She wore black hose, black silk shorts, and a sheer white blouse, the top three buttons of which had never been used. "How did you know my name?"

"I'm a real fan of yours." She took a screwdriver from her tray, leaned over in front of him, and set it on the table. In a supreme act of will, he averted his eyes. She put a second screwdriver down; he stole a glimpse. A third, a fourth. Tommy stared,

not at her conspicuous bosom, but at the growing array of drinks in front of him.

"Excuse me, I didn't order these."

"I hope not."

"Then why am I getting them?"

"Ask her," said the waitress, pointing at a tall woman in a blue jumpsuit across the room. "She knows. And so does she—" A beauty wearing oversized sunglasses waved. "And that one—" A blonde wearing a tight Coors t-shirt blew him a kiss. "And her, and her . . ."

"Ask me," said a breathy voice next to him. Tommy twisted in his chair, bumping the table. Vodka-flavored orange juice slopped over the rims of six glasses. The voice belonged to a plump woman with a bushel of streaked brown hair.

"Thanks," he said, nodding like a doll with a spring-mounted head. Her companion, an oily man in an orange turtleneck, scowled.

"I'm going, Tommy," said the waitress. "Here's something from me." She stuffed a slip of paper into his shirt pocket, winked, and flounced off. Unfolding the paper, he read, "Lola, anytime, 224-2308."

"Didn't I see you once on *Saturday Night Live*?" said the woman with the hair.

"No." He downed half the nearest drink.

"Aren't you Tommy Canova?"

He tried to stroke his missing beard. "My name is Cavanaugh."

"Hey, big shot," said the angry man in the turtleneck, "you want to sit over here or what?"

"No thanks. I'm waiting for a friend."

"Your friend has arrived," said the blond Coors fan as she slid onto the chair next to Tommy. "I'm Gail."

"Hi, Gail." He gave her a flustered smile. "Have a drink." He pushed one of the glasses toward her. It glided across the wet surface of the table and over the edge.

"Jesus Christ!" Gail reared up, knocking the table over and setting off a chain reaction. Liquor splashed, glasses shattered. Those within range cried out in dismay; the rest of the bar stared.

"What's going on?" A heavyweight in a rugby shirt appeared out of nowhere.

"This son of a bitch threw a drink at me!" said Gail. "Just because he's Tommy Canova and I'm nobody." She daubed at the corners of her eyes with a cocktail napkin. The bouncer turned to Tommy. The place was as quiet as an empty church. Tommy made a strangled noise and shook his head dazedly.

The bouncer shrugged. "I'm going to ask both of you to leave. Quietly. I'm sorry, Mr. Canova."

"Cavanaugh."

"I'm sorry."

The exquisite woman in the sunglasses booed. Others took it up.

"Don't ever come back, creep," said the man in the orange turtleneck.

"Where would he be without us?" someone shouted.

"Yeah, that's right!" came the chorus.

Ross was nowhere to be seen.

Tommy ran a light and put a dozen blocks between himself and the bar before he slowed his battered '73 Pinto to the speed limit. The more he considered what had happened, the less sense it made. The explanation he finally decided on was a coincidence of mistaken identity, herd instinct, and booze. After all, he told himself as he turned on the radio, the alternative was mass insanity.

"It's nine-thirty on another fabulous FRN Friday, and we've got gold coming up from the summer of 1978, by request from Somerville. It's 'Baby, Get Well Soon' by Tommy Canova."

Violins sobbed and a doleful piano introduced a voice which quavered much like his own:

"This is just a song to say 'I care'

And 'How are you today?'"

He gripped the steering wheel as if it were his last link to reality.

"Babe, I hear you're feeling better there.

You'll soon come home to stay."

There was a flash of high beams in his mirror, honking, and a red Trans Am laid down a coat of rubber on the asphalt next to him. He glanced at the speedometer: the indicator was dallying with fifteen miles per hour. The deejay came on, repeated the title and that maddening name again, then cued a Pepsi commercial. The hair at the base of Tommy's neck prickled. *Call the station*, he thought as he gunned it for home.

His route took him past Food City. A police car with lights flashing was parked by the front door. A crowd peeked between sale posters hung on the plate glass facade. Overturned shopping carts were scattered across the lot. Tommy made a U-turn at the end of the block.

The door to the loading dock was open to the warm summer air; the stockroom was deserted. A stack of cardboard boxes, the next day's chicken special, was sitting in a pool of melted ice water. Tommy lifted the soggy lid of the top carton. The smell made his eyes itch.

He found Kubicek, the assistant manager, on Beverage Boulevard at the rear of the store. He was spreading sawdust over the remains of a beer display. Max Kubicek was a big man with a bigger voice; he was the first store employee whose name new customers learned. In the six months Tommy had worked at Food City, they had become close friends. He was wearing his pin-striped uniform shirt unbut-

IDENTITY CRISIS

toned and his black bow tie was dangling from one collar.

"Max, what the hell is going on?"

Kubicek paled at the sight of Tommy. "*Now* you show up!" He shoved Tommy behind the cooler. "Get down before they see you." Tommy tried to protest; Kubicek laid a hand on his shoulder and pushed. "Down, dammit!" Kubicek himself squatted, motioned Tommy to follow, and waddled out to the stockroom.

"What's going on here?" Tommy tried not to laugh at him. "Look at these birds."

Kubicek grunted as he straightened up. "Hope I don't have to do that again soon. Kids! Started just after you knocked off. Hanging around the meat counter, just a few of them." He started to catch his breath. "They kept coming. Yeah, too bad about the spoilage."

"What did they want?"

"I've never seen anything like it—the way they busted this place up. They must have been hopped up on something." He met Tommy's gaze and his features hardened. "I thought you said your name was Cavanaugh."

Tommy's mouth opened and closed again wordlessly. "M-Max, I swear it is."

"They say it's Canova. They say you're famous. A rock star, or used to be."

"No." He sank onto a crate of tomato sauce. "This is a joke. Ross put you up to this."

"You think he's going to pay damages?" Kubicek brushed a hand through his crew cut. "Look kid, you can't stay here. Somebody's bound to see you." He put an arm around Tommy's shoulder and dragged him to his feet.

Tommy broke free and turned to confront his friend. "This is a mistake, I tell you! I'm me, Tommy Cavanaugh. I've never been famous and never want to be."

"The cops think different."

"The cops?"

Kubicek shrugged. "Okay, maybe you need time to readjust. But remember: there's a million guys who'd change places with you without thinking twice. Hell, I'm one of them." He laughed as they reached the door.

"Yeah, sure." Tommy took a deep breath and squared his shoulders. "So I guess I'd better take a couple of days off. Until I get this cleared up."

"That's the spirit, kid. Keep your sense of humor and you'll be okay." He shook Tommy's hand with a bluff finality. "You're a good man. We're ... I'm going to miss you. And don't worry about the damages. Who knows, maybe the publicity will do this store some good."

Got to get home, Tommy thought numbly as he started the car. In the year he had lived in the Romanis' third-floor apartment, no one had ever vis-

ited him. He preferred it that way. There would be peace behind his locked door and time enough to figure things out. He pulled onto the street like a student driver on test day, turned the radio up, and searched for his song, punching buttons until his fingers ached. As he waited for a light near his house, he was rewarded.

"... is near.

"Someday we'll be together, dear."

"Well," said the announcer in a voice as mellow as a yawn, "it was good to hear that again. That was the title cut from 'Cure for the Blues' by Tom Canova, released way back in 1974 on the Roundhouse label. Lots of folks still calling in from Somerville to say that they've seen old Tom today. And it's coming up on eleven o'clock here on WRAW, alternative radio."

There was a police car parked in the shadows a block away from home. A cop waved him over.

"Sorry, sir. This street is closed."

"I live here, officer. Number eighteen."

The cop bent over and shined his light in Tommy's eyes. "Sorry, Mr. Canova. Didn't recognize you at first. Would you park it, please, and hop in my car?"

As Tommy climbed in next to him, the cop said, "Sorry to bother you, Mr. Canova, but we've got a little problem." He started the car and cruised down the street. "We've got some fans of yours down at the end of the street, waiting for you to come home. There's quite a few of them." He grinned. "You must be used to this kind of thing." Tommy nodded abstractedly, like a prisoner plotting his escape. "Lieutenant wants to know if you'd consider spending the night in a hotel. Easier to provide security. Easier on the neighbors, too. These kids can make a hell of a racket if they put their mind to it." He laughed; Tommy made chuckle-like noises. "Just a suggestion, understand. We can handle it if you stay. Problem is, we might have to take some of them down to the station."

"No. I don't want that."

"We appreciate it, Mr. Canova. I'll just pull into the driveway here and wait for you." In front of the house Tommy could see the glint of broken beer bottles. Romani's privet hedge had been breached in several places, his roses trampled. A streamer of toilet paper fluttered from the balcony of the top floor. Farther down the street two more police cars fenced in the crowd.

The house itself was dark. Tommy sneaked up the wooden fire escape of the aging three-decker to the landing on the top floor. He ducked under the clothesline, unlocked the back door, and stepped inside just as Romani's porch light went on. He collapsed onto the kitchen chair.

The first ring of the telephone was as unnerving as a scream. Tommy groped his way into the tv

**Tommy had never seen
anything like it.
Half a dozen cops
with their backs to him
braced against the surge
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The hiss of the police
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the screams,
the cheers,
and the chanting of his
name—"Tom-my!
Tom-my!"**

room without turning on any lights and picked up the receiver on the fifth ring.

The voice spoke immediately. "Hey, Tommy, is that you? Speak to me, man, I've been ringing all night."

"Who is this?"

"Tommy, Tommy, Tommy, you're hurting me, man. Forget your buddies, forget your old lady, but there's no way you're forgetting your Stevie."

There was an awkward pause, filled with the murmur of other connections. Someone knocked on the door. He put his hand over the receiver. "Go away!"

"Tommy, are you all right? You sound tired. I can hardly hear you."

"Stevie who?" The knocking grew more insistent.

"Stevie your agent, dammit! Hey, don't do this, man. Not to me. Not after all—"

Tommy slammed the receiver onto its cradle, stormed to the door, and yanked it open. Romani was wearing a green flannel bathrobe, plastic slippers, and a look of outrage. "What's wrong with the lights?" he said grimly. "You wreck them too?"

"Nothing's wrong." Tommy's hand trembled as he flicked on the switch. Romani brushed past him into the apartment and gasped in horror.

What he saw was the usual clutter: piles of comic books, half a bag of potato chips and a meat pie tin on the tv, two muddy sneakers and a white sock on the broken-backed couch, a triangular stack of beer cans climbing the wall. The balding rug was filthy; Tommy did not own a vacuum cleaner. Sun and accumulated dust had tanned the white curtains that the last tenants had left behind.

"What do you want, Mr. Romani?"

"I'll tell you what I want," Romani said, his gray-stubbled jowls quivering. "I want you out. Out of this house, out of my life! You understand? And I'm going to keep your security deposit."

Tommy slumped in bewilderment at the accelerating pace of disaster. He tried to console himself by remembering that all of this crazy hate and love was really directed at Canova—except that it was Cavanaugh who was losing his job, his friends, and now his apartment.

"Okay." He drifted toward the doorway. "I'll be back for my things when I find a new place." The telephone started to ring.

It seemed as if he climbed down a thousand stairs before he reached the front door of the house. He opened it—and stepped into the tumultuous night.

Tommy had never seen anything like it. Half a dozen cops with their backs to him braced against the surge of joyous teenagers, while the neighbors in their pajamas shrunk like frightened ghosts into the shadows of their porches. The mechanical hiss of the police radio mingled with the screams and the cheers and above all the chanting of his name—"Tom-my! Tom-my!" Sound filled the emptiness inside him. He waved hesitantly to his fans.

The cop came up to him out of the dark. "Let's go, Mr. Canova," he said, tugging at Tommy's arm. Tommy allowed himself to be led away.

This time the cop ushered him into the back seat. There were no handles on the doors. He tried to sink both hands into his beard, touched only bare skin, and clapped them together in frustration. The cop's attempts at conversation were ignored. They drove in silence for twenty minutes.

"Here's the Sheraton." The cop got out and opened Tommy's door. "Now don't worry, we'll be watching." Silence. "Good night, Mr. Canova."

"The hell it is," said Tommy under his breath as he pushed through the revolving door into the lobby. The desk clerk was reading something under the counter as he strolled up. "I need a room."

"I knew it!" She gaped as if he were naked. "You're Tom Canova!"

He sighed. "And I need a room."

She was bouncing up and down on her seat. "But you don't understand. I have all your records; your book changed my life. I heard about you on the radio, about your being in town, so I've been carrying it around so I could get your autograph if I saw you, and here you come through the door!" She held up a thin paperback: *Songs for the Lovesick* by Tom Canova. On the front cover there was a color print of a beautifully frail woman in a lacy, high-necked white nightgown. She was arranged like a display of chrysanthemums on a brass bed, gazing out an open window at an apple tree in bloom.

"Can I see that?" Tommy snatched the book from her and riffled the pages. It was a book of poetry. On the back cover was a black and white photo of him standing under an apple tree in bloom. He was holding a Siamese cat, and there was a twelve-string guitar leaning against the tree trunk.

Tommy did not play the guitar; he was allergic to cats.

"You will sign it?" she said fervently.

"What about my room?" She booked him into a tenth-floor, eighty-dollar-a-night double with a view of the river. He had no money to pay, but she assured him that his name was security enough. He asked to borrow her book, promised to compose a poem specially for her on the inside cover, and dashed for the elevator before she had a chance to cry.

Tommy had never before stayed in a hotel, and he found his accommodations oppressive. The air was sterile and overly chilled; the windows could not be opened. There was none of the comfortable mess he was used to. To him the spotless and elegant room was about as inviting as a jail cell. He settled gingerly onto the enormous bed and examined the desk clerk's book.

He was relieved to read the terse biographical note: "Tom Canova was born in New York City in 1949. At the height of his acclaim as a singer and songwriter, he retired to his farm in Northern California. His hobby is solitude." Tommy was, in fact, from Brooklyn's Flatbush, but his birthdate was April 2, 1954.

Yet the poems themselves disturbed him. Two were alarmingly similar to those he had sold to the greeting card company; several lines were word for word. Although the rest were new to him, he read them with a growing sense of *déjà vu*.

He stared resentfully at the photo on the back cover. That famous, cat-loving son of a bitch—he should be the one trapped up here, afraid to walk down the street without causing riots. He, Tommy Cavanaugh, butcher, Sunday afternoon scribbler, slob—he should still be free.

Tommy tossed the book at the wall and got up for a drink of water. To his consternation, he found that even the glasses were sanitized and gift-wrapped. He quenched his thirst by putting his mouth to the faucet. As he climbed back into bed, it occurred to him that amnesia might be the answer. He decided to examine his memory of the past few years to see if there were any inexplicable gaps. He had regressed himself into the summer of 1979 before the tedium of his life put him to sleep.

He awoke well after noon the next day and called room service for breakfast in bed. After he had dined on chilled melon balls, *quiche alsacienne*, and champagne, he had the front

desk summon a cab. The driver balked when he heard the suburban address, but luckily Friday had been Tommy's payday; he dropped two twenties onto the front seat and settled back into silence.

The cabbie dropped him at the end of a driveway which climbed to a stone house torn from the pages of *Progressive Architecture*. He strode through the gate toward a shirtless man in plaid Bermuda shorts perched atop a drive-it-yourself lawn mower. He had a hairy paunch. Dr. John Quinton Vaughn dismounted and removed his sunglasses as Tommy approached.

"Hello." He looked puzzled. "May I help you?"

"I'm Canova again, Jack."

Vaughn nodded. "I guess I'm sorry to hear that, Tom. You want to come in?"

The study was as Tommy remembered it: one wall bright with windows and framed diplomas, the others dark with teak and Brazilian leather. There were the same scattered journals of psychopharmacology, neurophysiology, and other jawbreaking disciplines, the big messy desk, the smells of pipe tobacco and dusty books, the multicolored model brain.

"Drink?"

"Scotch rocks."

"When did you lose Tommy Cavanaugh?"

"This morning when I woke up. But he started unraveling last night." He accepted the glass from Vaughn; the doctor did not join him. "I shaved my beard."

Vaughn sat on the edge of his desk. "So I see."

"I was recognized." He drank. "You told me so, but I wouldn't listen, okay? I should have had the plastic surgery."

"How do you feel?"

"Older." He chuckled bitterly. "After all, yesterday I was twenty-six, today I'm thirty-one." He wandered over to the bar and fixed himself a larger drink. "It's like not quite waking up from a dream. I can't place myself."

"What now?"

"We try again, of course. It worked, Jack: you gave me another chance. Those five stinking years on the Coast..." He grinned and flicked them from his shoulder like a ball of lint. "Discrepancies in the dates never occurred to me. Every block you placed in my memory held."

"This time." Vaughn shook his head. "I warned you before: you're developing a resistance to the inhibitors. And the hypnotherapy for Cavanaugh was extremely complicated. Maybe it's time to stop running away from yourself, Tom."

"Don't leave me as Canova, Jack." He heard his old whine returning, and shivered. "He's too screwed up to survive. He's a cartoon character, a pr flack's imitation of life. I don't care if it's Cannon or Conolly or Coutermash—I've got to be somebody else." 17

Dr. Van Helsing's Handy Guide to Ghost Stories

by Kurt Van Helsing

THE GOOD PROFESSOR OFFERS OUR READERS
A SHORT (IF NOT QUITE PAINLESS) COURSE
IN THE LITERATURE OF SUPERNATURAL DREAD

"Of all the common and familiar subjects of conversation ... there is none so ready to hand, nor so unusual, as that of visions of Spirits, and whether what is said of them is true. It is the topic that people most readily discuss and on which they linger the longest because of the abundance of examples, the subject being fine and pleasing and the discussion the least tedious that can be found."

—Pierre le Loyer,
Livres des Spectres

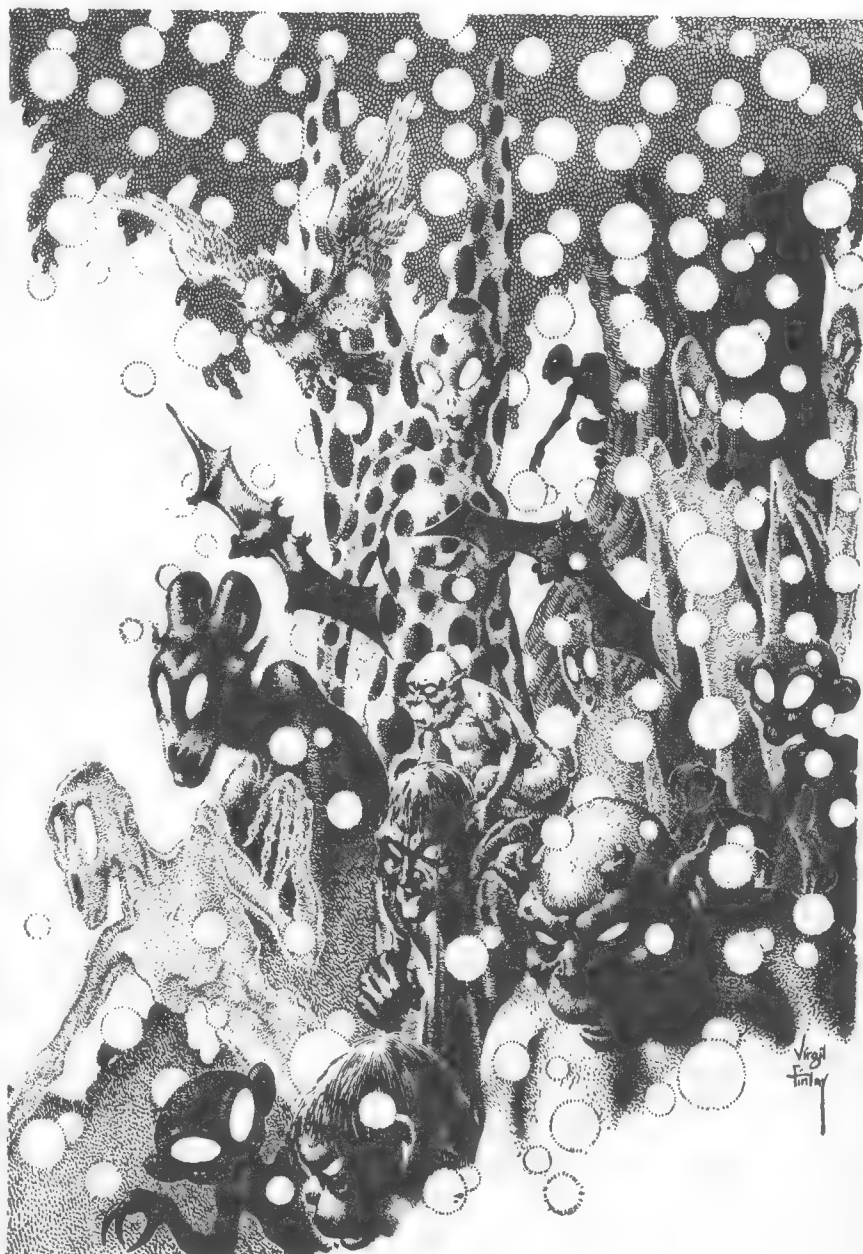
M. le Loyer may have been a trifle too enthusiastic—he was writing in 1586—but there's truth in what he said. Ghosts are indeed a fine and pleasing subject, in fiction as well as in life, and in the pages that follow I'll do my best to introduce you to a few, as well as to the men and women who've written about them.

For writers, as you'll discover, the ghost story has always had a singular appeal. It offers them a chance to sport with major issues, from morality to mortality, while raising a shudder or two. It also offers them, in a field whose critical standards are by no means daunting, a shot at literary distinction of the more enduring sort.

As for its appeal to readers, we shall talk of that later. For now, lest critics quibble, we'll begin this overview in time-honored academic fashion by defining our terms—which isn't quite as simple as it sounds.

What, exactly, is a ghost story? In the narrowest sense, it's a tale in which a disembodied spirit returns from the dead, usually to perform some familiar task:

- haunting a particular spot (such as the site of its unconsecrated burial or the house in which it met a violent death) or a particular person (one who has violated its grave, perhaps, or defied an ancient curse);
- visiting retribution upon its murderer, or upon the murderer's family



or descendants;

- guarding a tomb or treasure (or, conversely, leading others to it);
- warning the living of some impending good fortune or catastrophe;
- doing penance for crimes committed in life.

Such activities are traditionally confined to the nighttime, during which the ghost may make its presence known in any of a variety of ways:

- by becoming visible (in its former earthly shape, or as a corpse, a sheeted figure, even a severed limb);
- by characteristic sounds or speech (anything from echoing footfalls and spectral howls to whole pages of dialogue);
- by animating physical objects such as doors, tables, daggers, and the like;
- by altering the atmosphere around it, whether literally (chilling a room, for example) or spiritually (chilling the blood).

That, anyway, is a strict definition of the form. In truth, however, the "ghost story" as we know it today need not—and usually does not—contain anything resembling a ghost. In common usage the term has come to stand for any tale in which some supernatural force impinges on the world of mortal men.

Origins of the Ghost Story

All the elements of the classic ghost story can be found as far back as the first century, when Pliny the Younger describes a haunted house in Athens occupied by the specter of an emaciated old man, complete with long beard, bristling hair, and clanking chains. After most of its residents have succumbed to disease brought on by sleeplessness and terror, the house is left deserted until an intrepid philosopher named Athenodorus agrees to spend the night there. Some time after darkness the specter appears; beckoning the man to follow, it leads him to a spot in the courtyard outside. "Human bones were found buried there," writes Pliny, "and bound in chains. Time and the earth had moldered away the flesh, and only the skeleton remained. It was publicly buried; and after the rites of sepulcher, the house was no longer haunted."

Yet the ghost story is in fact far

older than this. Ghosts appear in the literature of ancient Greece (as in Homer's *Odyssey*), Egypt (in *The Book of the Dead*), China (in the *Analects* of Confucius), Babylon (in the *Gilgamesh* epic), and Assyria (in which elaborate rituals guarded the home from roving ghosts who peered through windows), as well as in the Old Testament and the Apocrypha. (1 *Samuel* 28 describes how the Witch of Endor conjures up the apparition of a dead prophet; *Ecclesiasticus* 39 warns the faithful, "There are spirits that are created for vengeance, and in their fury they lay on grievous torments.")

In fact, spirits of the dead are central to the folk-myths of virtually all primitive cultures, and there is good reason to believe that the ghost story is as old as mankind itself. "Who told the first ghost story?" asked Montague Summers, the noted Catholic authority on the supernatural: "Some son of Adam, I suppose, far back in dimmest antiquity, housed in a cave, as he looked up at the vast endless spaces of heaven powdered with nightly stars, as he wondered at the mysterious darkness, the depths of shadow, the remoteness of shapes familiar by day but which took on strange forms at the approach of evening: marveled and told his children how he seemed to see the shadow of their grandsire who had gone from them so short a while, who had lain stark and motionless and cold. The old hunter had returned, yet he brought terror in his train, for now he had something of the night and the wind, of the great untrammelled forces of Nature with which man contended daily for his right to live. And his brood listened with awe; they trembled, they scarce knew why, and were afraid."

Fear—the very word *ghost* is rooted in it. "The derivatives," says the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "seem to point to a primary sense to *wound*, *tear*, *pull to pieces*." Consider, too, some of its original pre-Teutonic associations: the Sanskrit word for *fury*, the Old Norse for *to rage*, the Persian for *ugly*, the Gothic for *to terrify*. Ghosts, in short, were humanity's fear made manifest—for "fear," as the late Harold C. Goddard noted, "is like faith: it ultimately creates what at first it only imagined."

The fear took many forms. It was, from the start, a fear of nature, of all

the dark, mysterious, and overwhelming forces with which early man was surrounded. Spirits, or *anima*, inhabited the trees, the rivers, the mountains, the thunder; jealous spirits, prone to anger and revenge. Animism is a fundamental assumption of all primitive cultures—nor is modern man a stranger to it, when the normal restrictions on his imagination are relaxed: "A house is never still in darkness to those who listen intently," the British playwright James M. Barrie once wrote. "There is a whispering in distant chambers, an unearthly hand presses the window, the latch rises. Ghosts were created when the first man woke in the night."

But he is also heir to a more specific fear: a fear of the human dead—which, in *The Golden Bough*, James Fraser termed "probably the most powerful force in the making of primitive religion." Often attached to slain enemies and departed ancestors, this fear is founded, in part, upon a sense of guilt—in the latter case, upon the survivor's traditional guilt at remaining alive (thus the phrase "the envious dead"), the ingrate's guilt at having failed to pay a proper homage to the deceased, even the murderer's guilt at having "willed" another's death through half-buried feelings of rage or resentment. (Children, those primitive beings of our own world, often believe they have caused a sibling's death in this manner.) Significantly, ancient funeral rites were largely concerned with placating the dead (thus the admonition to "Rest in Peace"), and tombstones may have originally been a way of insuring that they would not rise again.

But ghosts need not always punish: they may also trace their origins to humanity's more positive attitudes toward the dead. Like parental figures, the spirits can bestow rewards for good behavior; more important, they are expressions of our hope for personal immortality, and of our longing for departed loved ones. "Without death," Schopenhauer maintained, "there would be no philosophy, no poetry." Nor, indeed, would there be ghost stories.

According to Freud, the primitive *id* is unable to distinguish between fantasy and reality; its daytime cravings can thus be fulfilled each night in sleep. As we all learn in times of bereavement, the dead 'haunt' our



NEGOTIVM-PERAMBVLANS, IN TENEBRIS

dreams—and the more recent our loss, the more powerful their hold. Hence Alexander Laing's assertion that "a ghost's visitations usually are confined to a brief period after the death of the body," and the claim, so common in ancient literature, that "the ghost came to me last night as I slept."

Yet not all apparitions need be born in dreams; current research hints that some people may also conjure them up during hypnosis. According to one recent report, even the most experienced hypnotists are unable to tell if a subject is in a genuine trance or if he's simply pretending—except for one curious difference: "When hypnotized subjects are told that a nonexistent friend is sitting in a nearby chair, most of them will enter into a convincing conversation with the empty air. So will the simulators, who almost invariably guess that this is what a real hypnotic subject would do. But about a third of the real hypnotic subjects will also report that their friend is looking slightly transparent—they can see the back of the chair right through his body. So far . . . no simulator has ever invented this detail on his own."

Lost in dreams, some men greet departed relatives; others, under the spell of hypnotic suggestion, chat with absent friends transparent as ghosts. But at the dawn of civilization mere *thinking* may have been enough to summon spirits—or so Princeton psychologist Julian Jaynes suggests. In his controversial study, *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* (1977), Jaynes

theorizes that the various unspoken commands issuing from the right hemisphere of the human brain were, in ancient times, interpreted by the left half, not as thoughts but as "voices" from outside—originally as the voices of dead ancestors, later as the voices of gods. Not until the first millennium B.C. did man learn to identify these commands as coming from within. Thus, if Jaynes's research is to be believed, a regard for ancestral ghosts may have been the genesis not only of religion, but of consciousness itself.

History of the Ghost Story

Since ghosts are, as one observer has noted, "the true immortals," they easily survived the transformation of man's consciousness. Classic literature abounded in them; during the Middle Ages they received earnest scrutiny in many a monastic treatise, along with a host of goblins, gnomes, demons, familiars, incubi, and succubi. Their less solemn exploits were largely confined to unrecorded folk-tales, but by the fourteenth century writers such as Boccaccio and Chaucer were chronicling them in poem and prose. Though dozens of learned discourses continued to appear, the ghost had at last entered the province of pure fiction.

With the publication of Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* in 1764, the supernatural found its own literary form: the gothic novel, characterized by somber atmosphere, melodramatic plot, and the medieval architecture of its setting. Of course, Walpole's imagination may have been

nurtured by many earlier works: the *Arabian Nights*, for example, were rich in magic and colorful incident. (Compiled by fifteenth-century Moslem scholars but based upon Near Eastern, Indian, and Oriental folktales dating back literally thousands of years, they had been translated into French as early as 1704-1717 and—in the words of mythologist Joseph Campbell—"struck Europe with an impact that initiated a new era of Occidental romance.") There were, as well, early continental sources equally exotic; in fact, *Otranto* itself was originally purported to have been translated from the Italian of a twelfth-century Neapolitan scribe, one "Onuphrio Muralto"—a play on the author's own name.

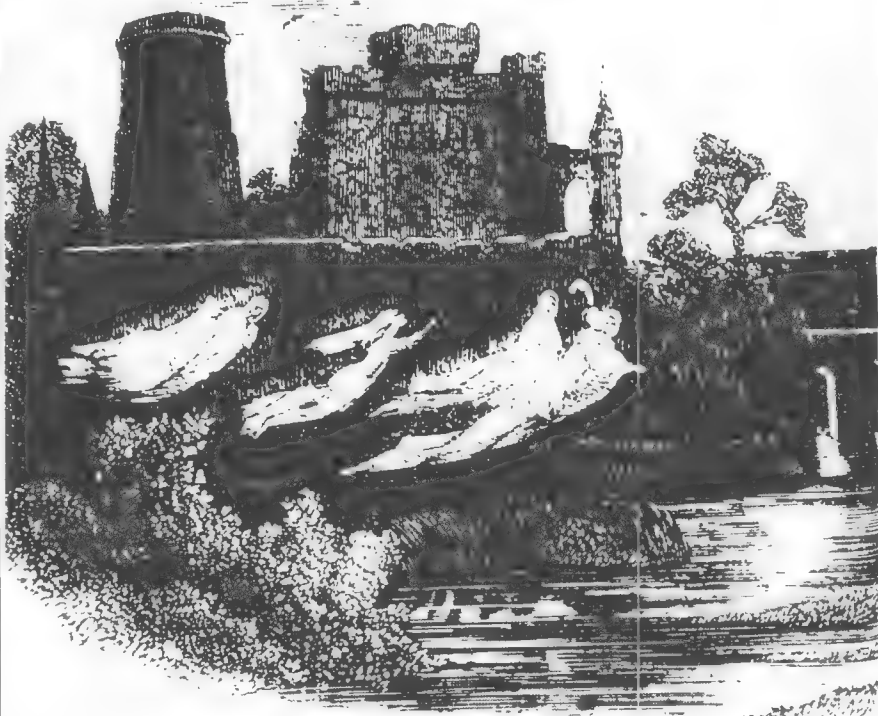
But if Walpole had set out to recreate a dark medieval romance, the result surpassed mere pastiche: though now quite dated, his book proved the inspiration for an entire school of fiction, and E. F. Bleiler suggests that it may well be "one of the half-dozen historically most important novels in English." In his remarkable essay *Supernatural Horror in Literature* (1927), the late Howard Phillips Lovecraft, himself perhaps America's greatest exponent of the terror tale, enumerated *Otranto's* most characteristic elements:

"First of all . . . the Gothic castle, with its awesome antiquity, vast distances and ramblings, deserted or ruined wings, damp corridors, unwholesome hidden catacombs, and galaxy of ghosts and appalling legends. . . . The tyrannical and malevolent nobleman as villain; the saintly, long-persecuted, and generally insipid heroine who undergoes the major terrors and serves as a point of view and focus for the reader's sympathies; the valorous and immaculate hero, always of high birth but often in humble disguise; the convention of high-sounding foreign names, mostly Italian, for the characters; and the infinite array of stage properties which includes strange lights, damp trapdoors, extinguished lamps, mouldy hidden manuscripts, creaking hinges, shaking arras, and the like. All this paraphernalia reappears with amusing sameness, yet sometimes with tremendous effect, throughout the history of the Gothic novel; and is by no means extinct even today, though subtler technique now forces it to assume

a less naive and obvious form. An harmonious milieu for a new school had been found, and the writing world was not slow to grasp the opportunity."

Aside from Clara Reeve, whose *Old English Baron* (1777) used many of the same plot devices—a disinherited nobleman and his father's helpful ghost, archetypes that predated *Hamlet*—Walpole's first major disciple was Ann Radcliffe, best known for *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), a romantic thriller about kidnapping and banditry in an Apennine castle. Oddly enough, though an accomplished stylist, Radcliffe chose to violate one of the primary canons of supernatural fantasy. "However improbable the happenings in a detective story," wrote British novelist L. P. Hartley, "they can and must be explained in terms that satisfy the reason. But in a ghost story, where natural laws are dispensed with, the whole point is that the happenings cannot be so explained. A ghost story that is capable of a rational explanation is as much an anomaly as a detective story that isn't." Or as Arthur Reeve put it in a 1919 essay, "The detective's case is solved at the end. But even at the end of a ghost story, the underlying mystery remains." This is a key to the literature's eternal appeal—that ghosts embody, in Reeve's words, "the very quintessence of mystery"—and even critics of the day objected when Radcliffe's apparitions, save in the posthumously published *Gaston de Blondville* (1826); invariably turned out to be masqueraders, errant nuns, or magic lantern slides.

Readers who craved "natural explanations" of this sort could always turn to an anonymous book called *Ghost Stories; Collected with a Particular View to Counteract the Vulgar Belief in Ghosts and Apparitions* (1846—Summers traces this to 1823), in which every one of the twenty phantoms described turns out to be a fraud. ("What is a ghost?" asks the introduction. "If visible, it must be matter... substantial flesh and blood and bones.... If it is not matter, it can only exist in the imagination of the beholder, and must therefore be classed with the multifarious phantoms which haunt the sick man's couch in delirium.... Is it nude? Oh no! Oh shocking! This is contrary to all the rules. It always appears dressed. If



the man has been murdered, it appears in the very clothes he was murdered in, all bloody, with a pale, murdered-looking face, and a ghastly wound in the breast, head, stomach, back or abdominal region, as the case may be; but always in decent clothes. If the person died quietly a natural death, in bed, then the ghost is generally clad in long white robes, or a shroud; but still properly dressed. So then, we have the ghost of the clothes also—the ghost of the coat and unmentionables—the ghost of the cocked hat and wig. How is this?") In reaction to this hard-headed school, gothic novelist T. J. Horsley-Curties, in the preface to his *Ethelwina, or The House of Fitz-Auburne*, pointed out: "The Author of this Work... in one circumstance... has stepped beyond the modern writers of Romance, by introducing a *Real Ghost*."

Real ghosts also make their appearance in two other famous gothics: Matthew Gregory Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), in which the lustful Brother Ambrosio enjoys some pleasantly prurient delights before he's finally dispatched by a demon; and the Reverend Charles Robert Maturin's *Mel-*

moth the Wanderer (1820), a long, highly digressive work about a pact with the devil, filled with excruciating scenes of torture, madness, and cannibalism amid the dungeons of the Spanish Inquisition, and complicated by narratives within narratives within narratives within narratives.

Many sources list Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) as another of the major gothics. But for all its heavy German trappings (and heavy allegorical content), it might more reasonably be seen as an early form of science fiction, in that its controlling force is Science. In true fantasy, the controlling force is Magic—thus distinguishing Mrs. Shelley's work from two well-known vampire novels, Dr. John W. Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), both of them fantasies—not sf—in that they deal with supernatural, rather than natural, beings. (The former, coincidentally, was started the same night as *Frankenstein*, in what proved a remarkably fruitful horror-writing competition.)

Perhaps because of its thinly disguised sexual content, vampire literature found a ready audience in

nineteenth-century England, but the Victorians were also enthusiastic devotees of the traditional ghost tale, and these were a staple of popular journals such as *Blackwood's* and Charles Dickens's *All the Year Round*. Robert Louis Stevenson referred to them as "crawlers," presumably because they were designed to make one's skin crawl. "In the magazine ghost stories," the Society for Psychical Research noted in its 1884 *Report of the Committee on Haunted Houses*, "the ghost is a fearsome being, dressed in a sweeping sheet and shroud, carrying a lighted candle, and speaking in dreadful words from fleshless lips. It enters at the stroke of midnight, through the sliding panel, just by the bloodstain on the floor. . . . Or it may be only a clanking of chains, a tread as of armed men heard whilst the candles burn blue and the dogs howl."

Today, for all their lurid melodrama, many of these tales seem hopelessly crude; Edward Bulwer-Lytton's celebrated "Haunted and the Haunters," for example, long a favorite of the anthologists, is practically unreadable. Others, often written by and for women, now seem as insipidly sentimental as the romantic novelist described in a 1931 sketch by Walter de la Mare. ("Mrs. Florence Barclay, the author of *The Rosary*, is said to have returned thanks to Heaven that she had never admitted to the hospitality of her fiction any character whom she would not have welcomed to the Vicarage and to afternoon tea.") The title of one collection, *Ghost Stories and Presentiments* (1888)—to which A. Conan Doyle contributed several

unsigned tales—suggests one of the problems: thanks, perhaps, to the family audiences for which they were intended, as well as to the prevailing worship of technology, many Victorian ghost stories display an excessive concern with pseudoscientific psychic paraphernalia, while the ghosts themselves are all too occupied with missions of mercy.

Such benevolence is—at least from the literary point of view—a mistake; "in fiction," says Summers, "the good and kindly ghost has little or no place." Just as A. A. Milne maintained that the proper detective novel required not merely a jewel theft or forgery but outright murder, Henry James noted that "good ghosts . . . make poor subjects," and the great English supernatural writer M. R. James (no relation) warned that "amiable and helpful apparitions" were better left to fairy tales; he preferred his ghosts to be "malevolent or odious." But for all their bloody trapplings, many Victorian ghosts bore an unsettling resemblance to fairy godmothers, or else emerged as harmless spirits more tormented than tormenting.

One exception to this rule was the Irish writer Joseph Sheridan LeFanu, author of some thirty gruesomely memorable ghost stories, as well as the classic mystery novel *Uncle Silas* (1864). Conventional morality appears to play little part in his shorter works: in tales such as "Green Tea," "The Familiar," and "Schalken the Painter," innocent parties tend to suffer quite ghastly fates—and so much the worse for readers who've identified with

them.

Unpleasant but undeniably effective, LeFanu was esteemed as "the Master" by a later writer whose work is at once more comforting and more chilling: the aforementioned Montague Rhodes James, provost of King's College, Cambridge, and later of Eton, who, solely for the fireside amusement of his friends, produced some of the finest ghost stories in the English language. The earliest were published in 1904 as *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary*; three slim volumes followed. Typically, many of the most successful stories concern not "ghosts" *per se* but reanimated corpses ("The Mezzotint," "The Haunted Dolls' House," "Martin's Close"), demons of various persuasions ("Count Magnus," "Casting the Runes," "The Treasure of Abbot Thomas"), monstrous spiders ("The Ash-Tree"), vampires ("An Episode of Cathedral History"), and even a malevolent hotel room ("No. 13").

Himself an authority on church history and medieval manuscripts, James drew upon this knowledge in his fiction. "The ghost story," he wrote, "is a slightly old-fashioned form; it needs some deliberateness in the telling; we listen to it the more readily if the narrator poses as elderly, or throws back his experiences to 'some thirty years ago.'"

The tales themselves often concern malign beings from even further in the past, stirred back to life by the researches of some bumbling antiquarian. Their atmosphere is scholarly, stuffy, and distinctly High Church, their tone gentle and urbane; for all the terrors they may provoke in passing, in the end they impart a feeling of cosy security. In his brilliant study *Elegant Nightmares: The English Ghost Story from LeFanu to Blackwood* (1977), Jack Sullivan traces this "antiquarian" tradition through the work of later English writers (often, like James, associated with Cambridge), including R. H. Malden, T. G. Jackson, E. G. Swain, A.N.L. Munby, L.T.C. Rolt, W. F. Harvey, and, to a lesser extent, H. Russell Wakefield and L. P. Hartley.

In contrast with this initialed and often obscure crew, Sullivan points to a second great supernatural tradition led by "transcendental" writers such as Arthur Machen, Algernon Blackwood, Walter de la Mare, E. F. Benson, and, to a degree, Oliver Onions,



A. E. Coppard, and Lord Dunsany. Though disparate in tone and in technique—de la Mare ("A:B:O," "Seaton's Aunt," "The Riddle," "The Tree") is the subtlest, Dunsany ("The Wonderful Window," "The Death of Pan," "A Shop in Go-by Street") the most whimsical, Onions ("The Rope in the Rafters," "The Beckoning Fair One") the most psychologically insightful, Coppard ("The Bogey Man," "Ahoy, Sailor Boy," "Arabesque the Mouse") the most cynical, Blackwood ("The Willows," "The Wendigo," "The Camp of the Dog") the best at evoking the forces of nature, and Machen ("Change," "Out of the Picture," "The Novel of the Black Seal," "The Great God Pan") at once the most lyrical and the most consistently terrifying—all these writers share a certain mystical outlook, a conviction that the supernatural world exists around us and within us, at this very moment, and that, to experience it, one need only "rend the veil," whether through madness, drugs, trauma, magical or poetic incantation, genetic predisposition, or the influence of some special person or place. At its best (as in Machen's "The White People" and its earlier incarnation, "The Ceremony"), the transcendental ghost tale is pagan, persuasively ecstatic, and as immediate as a dream; at its worst (as in some of Benson's cruder efforts, or in Blackwood's novels about "Crackland," a fairyland hidden in "the crack between Yesterday and Tomorrow"), it smacks of, as Sullivan remarks, "a sentimental pantheism gone sour."

Most writers, of course, cannot properly be grouped within any "school"; as with Edgar Allan Poe, their work may reveal wide and complex influences. In any overview of supernatural fiction, however, mention must be made of British writers such as Richard H. Barham (whose *In-goldsby Legends* recount ghost stories in light verse), "Captain" Frederick Marryat (*The Phantom Ship*, "The Werewolf"), Amelia B. Edwards (author of "Monsieur Maurice" and other Victorian classics, some with an Egyptological slant), E.F. Benson's religiously inclined brothers, A. C. and R. H. Benson (*Paul the Minstrel*; *The Light Invisible* and *A Mirror of Shalott*), M. P. Shiel (a hypnotic prose stylist, most successful in *The Purple Cloud*), Edward Lucas White ("Lukundoo," *The Song of the Sirens*), and

William Hope Hodgson (who specialized in maritime horror, and whose *House on the Borderland* is one of the most powerful works of cosmic fantasy ever written); the Americans Fitz-James O'Brien ("What Was It?") and F. Marion Crawford ("The Upper Berth," "The Screaming Skull," and others), the one born in Ireland, the other in Italy; literary collaborators Emile Erckmann and Alexandre Chatrian of France; the Germans E.T.A. Hoffmann ("The Nutcracker," "The Sandman," and other allegorical nightmares) and Gustav Meyrink, author of *The Golem*; Poe's Japanese disciple, Hirai Taro, who, in homage, called himself "Edogawa Rampo" and wrote a strange erotic story about a man who lived inside a chair; and the American expatriate Lafcadio Hearn, who retold the ghostly legends of Japan and China in exquisitely lyrical prose-poems.

Indeed, few authors have pursued literary careers without at least some excursions into supernatural fantasy, and so in ghost-story collections it has never been uncommon to find such celebrated names as Defoe, Goethe, Scott, Irving, Balzac, Hawthorne, Thackeray, Dickens, Hardy, Bierce, Twain, Stevenson, de Maupassant, Kipling, Wells, Chesterton, Forster, and Dinesen. Henry James, an illuminating critic of the genre, is often accorded pride of place here for tales such as "The Turn of the Screw"; its hyperanalytic style has made it a particular favorite among the academics (who see, in its narrator's ambiguous motives, room for still another dissertation) and among those who prefer psychological abstractions to atmosphere.

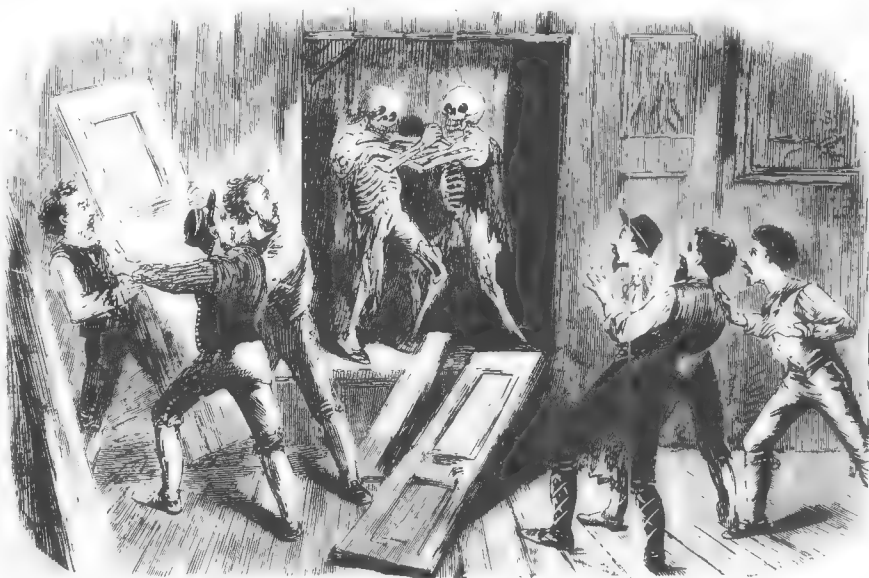
Unlike the Victorian, the modern age has not been kind to ghosts or ghost stories. "To most modern men

having ceased to recognize their own souls, the spectral tale is out of fashion, especially in America," concludes Russell Kirk, the conservative political theorist. Author of *The Surly Sullen Bell* (1962), an atmospheric, if didactic, collection of traditional ghost stories, he's convinced that the genre demands "a skill innately conservative."

The celebrated novelist Edith Wharton, author of such hauntingly beautiful tales as "Afterward" and "The Eyes," was equally pessimistic. "Since I first dabbled in the creating of ghost stories," she said in a memoir, "I have made the depressing discovery that the faculty required for their enjoyment has become almost atrophied in modern man." She blamed the form's decline on "those two worldwide enemies of the imagination, the wireless and the cinema."

One would assume, then, that she'd agree with the poet Osbert Sitwell, who, in an essay in *Penny Foolish* (1935), declared that ghosts had gone out with the advent of electricity. "Only by night do I believe in ghosts," he wrote, "and then more especially in a house that lies buried in the depth of the country and in which there is no electric light." Yet in "All Souls," Wharton's feminine narrator dismisses Sitwell with a scornful "What nonsense! As between turreted castles patrolled by headless victims with clanking chains, and the comfortable suburban house with a refrigerator and central heating where you feel, as soon as you're in it, that there's something wrong, give me the latter for sending a chill down the spine!"

The late H. R. Wakefield was similarly glum, and, in the end, similarly undecided. "Many—perhaps most—people simply can't read ghost stories," he complained in 1961. "They'd as soon read binomial theorem





stories. . . I've found that the cult of such tales is confined mainly to a small subset of highest brows." He concluded with an oft-heard warning: "I can assure would-be aspirants that no one in his senses ever tried to write ghost stories for a living." Yet this is the same author who'd written over a hundred such tales and who, in one of them, "The Red Hand," had spoofed his own bad faith: the story's hero, an aging horror writer with, like Wakefield, a hundred titles to his credit, has a change of heart, vows he'll have nothing more to do with this "chain-clanking tripe"—and is found strangled by one of his own ghostly creations. Though in the essay "Farewell to All Those!" Wakefield at last turned his back on the genre, he ended with the reflection, "Don't be too sure that none of the old magic endures!"

Is there an enduring human fascination with ghosts? For all her pessimism, Edith Wharton thought so: "Deep within us," she concluded, "the ghost instinct lurks." Arthur Koestler thinks so too—"We can no more escape the pull of magic inside us than the pull of gravity," he writes—and so did Vernon Lee (pseudonym of Viola Paget), author of such classic Victorian ghost tales as "Oke of Okehurst," whose narrator observes:

"We have all heard of ghosts, had uncles, cousins, grandmothers, nurses, who have seen them; we are all a bit afraid of them at the bottom of our soul. . . I am too skeptical to believe in the impossibility of anything."

Indeed, skepticism can have this curiously reverse effect: a total disbelief seems as foolish as belief. Anyone who doubts this might try asking several friends to "sell their souls" to him, in writing, à la *Dr. Faustus*; though offered several dollars, most people—even professed "skeptics"—are likely to refuse. As Arthur Reeve has noted, "In our inmost souls, secretly perhaps, we are as full of superstition as an obeah man."

Perhaps, then, it is not ghost tales that are out of place in the modern age, but simply the more dated types of ghosts themselves—"the violent old ghosts," as Virginia Woolf wrote in 1921: "the blood-stained sea captains, the white horses, the headless ladies of dark lanes and windy commons." Perhaps we need bid goodbye to only a few of the more worn-out props.

As to this, novelist Elizabeth Bowen was optimistic: "On the whole, it would seem, ghosts adapt themselves well, perhaps better than we do, to changing world conditions. . . Hitherto confined to antique manors,

castles, graveyards, crossroads, yew walks, cloisters, cliff-edges, moors or city backwaters, they may now roam at will. They do well in flats, and are villa-dwellers. They know how to curdle electric light, chill off heating, or de-condition air. Long ago they captured railway trains and installed themselves in liners' luxury cabins; now telephones, motors, planes, and radio wavelengths offer them self-expression."

"In the past," noted L.P. Hartley (whose best-known horror tales include "W. S.," "The Killing Bottle," and "The Travelling Grave"), "ghosts had certain traditional activities; they could squeak and gibber, for instance, they could clank chains. They were generally local, confined to one spot. Now their liberties have been greatly extended; they can go anywhere, they can manifest themselves in scores of ways. Like women and other depressed classes, they have emancipated themselves from their disabilities."

If ghosts are now emancipated, it is largely due to the inventiveness of writers such as Fritz Leiber, Robert Bloch, Ray Bradbury, Henry Kuttner, Clark Ashton Smith, Henry S. Whitehead, Seabury Quinn, August Derleth, Frank Belknap Long, Manley Wade Wellman, Joseph Payne Brennan, Richard Matheson, Charles Beaumont, Jack Finney, Dennis Etchison, Ray Russell, Henry Slesar, Kingsley Amis, John Metcalfe, John Collier, Charles Birkin, John Keir Cross, William Peter Blatty, Ira Levin, Thomas Tryon, Robert Marasco, Stephen King, and Ramsey Campbell. These modern practitioners of the supernatural tale have written for the major publishing houses and specialty firms such as Arkham House, for pulp magazines such as *Weird Tales* and contemporary slicks such as *Playboy*; they have even written for television and for Mrs. Wharton's two great villains, radio and film. H. R. Wakefield notwithstanding, some of them have even managed to make a decent living at it. More than a few have prospered.

But before we proclaim *The Triumph of the Spirit*, we'd better listen to the argument that's raging between Montague Summers and H. P. Lovecraft—an argument that calls into question the very foundations of the ghost story. The discussion resumes in next month's TZ; for now, class is dismissed. **17**



COME DRAIN THE C

The Tale th

It was one afternoon when I was young
in a village near here, which no one now remembers —
why, I will tell you — an afternoon of fiesta,
with the bells of the hermitage echoing in the mountains,
and a buzz of voices, and dogs barking. Some said
it could all be heard as far as Calatayud.

I was a boy then, though at that perilous point
when tiny things could terrify and amaze me.
The dust in the village square had been watered down,
and we waited, laughing and jostling
the satin rumps of the gypsy dancers.

Across from us, the girls, all lace and frills,
fluttered like tissue paper. Then at a signal,
as the charcoal-burner's dog rolled over and over,
shedding its ribbons, the village band
blundered into tune, and the day began.

The dancing dizzied me. There was one gypsy
unlike the others, tall, who spun on her feet,
laughing to herself, lost in her own amazement.
I watched her as though in a dream. All round,
my uncles and other men were calling *olé*
while the women tittered and pouted.

There were more feet than shoes,
more wine than glasses,
and more kisses than lips. The sun was burning.

Next came a magician, an ugly sly-eyed man
not from our district. "Fiesta, fiesta" he called,
then, chanting a kind of spell, he swore
he would conjure a live dove out of the air.

I saw the dove's wing peeping from his pocket,
so I wandered away, hating the sound of him,
among the tables, heavy with food and wine.

And there was the gypsy girl, standing alone,
head turned away to listen, as though she heard
bells in the hills. She saw me, and her eyes,
which were azure, not black, mocked me.

I could not stop looking. Lightly she danced across
and, keeping her eyes on mine, poured out
a glass of golden wine, and put it before me.
I glanced from her eyes to the wine. In it, the sun
was a small gold coin, the people looked like nuts.



DREAMS, AND HEAR ...

Hermit Told

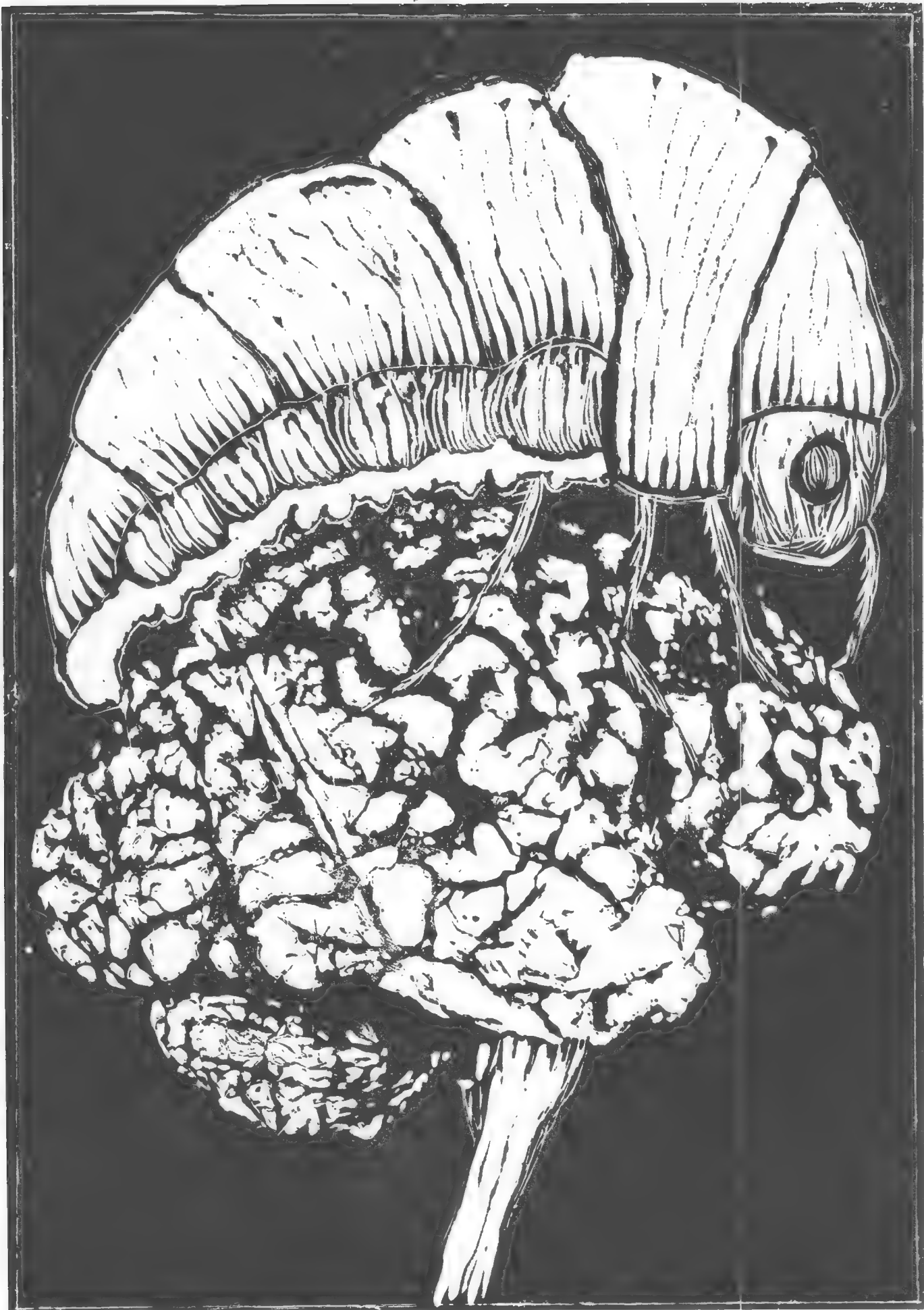
by
Alastair
Reid

The band were brass buttons, the towering mountains the size of pebbles, the houses matchboxes about the thumbnail square. A miniature magician was letting loose a dove, which floated upwards, and there, in that golden, glass-held afternoon, were those mocking eyes. Time in that moment hung upside down. In a gulp, I drank the wine.

What happened next? You must listen. Goggling boys, girls, dogs, band, gypsies, village, dove, magician, all rolled down my throat. Even the music glugged once and was gone. I was standing nowhere, horrified, alone, waiting for her eyes to appear and laugh the afternoon back, but nothing moved or happened. Nothing, nothing, nothing.

All that night, I lay in a clump of pines and seemed to hear the hunters with their dogs (unribboned now) closing to flush me out. I hid my face in the needles. All the next day, I tried to wish the village back, to vomit the wine, to free the white dove and the music. I could not. And as time passed, I lived on bitter nuts and bark and grasses, and grew used to the woods. I am still here on this barren mountainside. The years are nothing.

Yet I am sure of this — that somewhere in my body there is fiesta, with ribboned dogs, balloons, and children dancing in a lost village, that only I remember. Often I have visions, and I hear voices I know call out. Was it the false magician who tempted me to magic? Or was it the gypsy girl who dropped her eyes in a glass and asked me to work wonders? Even now, in age, I wait to see her, still a girl, come spiralling through the woods, bringing her mystery to me, and with her eyes teaching me to undream myself, and be a boy again believing in a dove made out of air, that circles overhead on a lost afternoon of fiesta. 17



FRED WAS AN EXTERMINATOR. POISON WAS HIS PROFESSION.
BUT THEN, ONE DAY, HE GLANCED INTO THE PIT—
AND BECAME . . .

The Man Who Couldn't Remember

by David Curtis

Eight o'clock in the morning, and the Bank of Huntingdon sign already said eighty-five. Fred Kingston eased forward, his shirt clinging to the back of the seat. "Another hot mother-fucker," he said to Johnny. "Want to stop and get some breakfast?"

Johnny, slumped down with his knees on the dashboard, tilted back his straw hat with the paisley band, and opened a bloodshot eye. "What if Bill catches us?"

"What if he does? He wouldn't fire us. He has a hard enough time finding somebody to do this shit as it is."

"Whatever you say. I'll just tell 'im you're drivin'. Wasn't *my* idea." Johnny sat up and grinned. "Must admit, a little food would probably help this hangover."

The first job was about ten miles out of town: an old clapboard farmhouse badly in need of paint, sitting on the edge of the woods, a vacant field beside it. Fred went up and knocked on the door. There was no answer. The air was sultry; the only sounds to be heard were the buzz of insects, the ticking of the truck engine as it cooled, and the occasional call of a distant bird.

As with most old farmhouses, the crawl-space under this one was low, less than a foot in some spots; being the smaller of the two men, Johnny volunteered to go under. Fred fed the hose to him as he wriggled his way along the ground. Then he climbed onto the back of the pickup to start the pump. The back of the truck was never cleaned, and the sticky

poison in the hundred-gallon tank often slopped over, so that you couldn't touch anything back there without getting some of the white fluid on you. The sickly sweet odor of the chlordane permeated everything, and Fred knew he would carry the smell home with him at the end of the day. He yanked on the starter cord and the engine roared to life. After it had warmed up a moment, he engaged the pump and leaped to the ground.

Walking over, he looked under the house to make sure Johnny was doing okay, fed him a little more hose, then straightened up and sat back to relax. After he had sat there awhile, a dog stuck its head around the corner of the house. Fred just stared back at it. Slowly it approached him and let him scratch behind its ears. Fred thought of his own dog back home, and of Alice. Right now she would probably be working in the garden, pulling weeds or picking peas. He wished he could be there with her; he knew how lonely she got sometimes, being there alone all day.

There was a yell from under the house, and Fred got down on his stomach to see what was happening. "Pull some of this hose out," said Johnny, his voice muffled by the paper filter he wore over his mouth. Fred began dragging the hose out and Johnny followed, backing out on his stomach and spraying as he went. Finally Johnny released the trigger and dropped the hose, emerging to squint in the bright sunlight.

"Damn, got some of that shit in my eye," he said, as he tore off the rubber gloves and paper mask, using the sleeve of his muddy coveralls to wipe at the irritation. "Burns!"

The Man Who Couldn't Remember

The next house was just around the bend, another old farmhouse. An elderly man in stained pants came out on the porch as Fred pulled into the driveway and shut off the engine. "You boys here to spray for termites?" He spat a brown stream of tobacco juice over the edge of the porch. "Been lookin' for ya since May."

"We're kinda behind," said Johnny, getting out of the pickup. Fred got out and pulled on his coveralls, dragged the hose over to where the old man was pulling a rusty piece of corrugated sheet metal away from the side of the house.

"Not much room under there," said the farmer.

"It's not as bad as the last one," said Fred. He pulled a dirty paper filter out of his pocket, fitting it over his nose and mouth. The pieces of sheet metal ran all the way around the bottom of the house, held in place by metal stakes and rocks, and when he bent down to look underneath he couldn't see anything beyond the first few feet. Fred pulled the mask down to his chin and turned to yell at Johnny, who was just climbing into the back of the pickup. "Hey, bring that flashlight, will ya? It's dark under here."

"All right, just a minute." Johnny yanked on the starter a couple of times until the engine caught, then jumped down and fished around under the seat for the flashlight. Finally he found it and brought it over.

"Thanks." Fred pulled the mask back over his mouth and began to wriggle under the house, flashlight in one hand, spray gun in the other. Rocks dug into his elbows and knees. He turned on the flash and swept it around in a half-circle. In most places there was a foot to a foot and a half of clearance, except for one corner where the dirt sloped up until it almost touched the bottom of the house. There was nothing else to see but the rocks piled here and there that supported the house, the bottom of the house itself, more rocks sticking up out of the dirt, and a few pale, scraggly mushrooms.

Fred worked himself into the high corner as well as he could and began to spray. The poison shot out in a fifteen-foot stream that gleamed in the beam of the flashlight. Where it hit the joists and sheet metal it broke up into a fine mist that soon permeated the air.

The mask did little to keep the chlordane out. Fred had taken the masks from the insulation truck back at the shop. The label on the box had read, "*For dust and fine particles—not to be used for sprays and poisonous gases.*" Still, it was better than nothing, Fred thought.

He swept the perimeter and the underpinings, anywhere the termites might climb up onto the wood of the house. Slowly he worked his way back to the square of daylight behind him. Once he banged his head on a joist and cursed softly to him-

self. In about ten minutes he had worked his way once more to the hole. As he backed out, he sprayed around the entrance. Johnny took the gun and began to spray the outside of the house.

Fred pulled down the mask and breathed sweet clean air. The old man, who had been standing near the entrance to the crawl-space while Fred was under the house, gave him a skeptical look. "You cain't be done already."

"Sure am. It doesn't take very long."

"But you was under there less than ten minutes!"

"Look, the boss expects us to do fifteen houses a day. What with all the driving we got to do, that doesn't leave much time for each house. I sprayed everything that needed spraying. You want to pay now, or have them send you a bill?"

"How much is it?"

"Twelve-fifty."

"Twelve-fifty! Was only ten last year."

"I'm sorry, I was supposed to tell you it went up before we did the house, but I forgot. Everything's going up, you know."

"I ain't agonna pay it!"

"Too late now." He pointed to Johnny, who was already dragging the hose back to the truck. "They'll send you a bill. You'll just have to have it out with the boss."

"I will," said the old man, spitting out tobacco juice. "I will."

By afternoon they had worked their way to the outskirts of McKenzie. Here the houses were newer, identical brick bungalows crowded together. The crawl-spaces were higher and better ventilated, and Fred didn't feel obligated to stick around when it was Johnny's turn to go under. Instead he lounged in the shade of a small tree, trying to escape the oppressive sun.

A man came out of the house next door and crossed the driveway toward Fred. "If I were you I'd quit before it's too late," said the man, sitting down next to Fred.

"Quit?" said Fred. He looked at the man closely for the first time. He was middle-aged, with dark hair, dark eyes, and close-set features that seemed somehow blank, as if untouched by thought or emotion.

The man waved a hand vaguely. "Your job. It's dangerous, you know. I used to do that stuff, until it gave me brain damage. Now I can't do anything. Permanent loss of short-term memory, that's what the doctor called it. After you leave I won't even remember you. Every time my wife goes out she has to leave a note so I'll know where she is and when she'll be back. If it wasn't for her, they'd probably have to put me away somewhere."

**Johnny took the spray
gun and put it
in his mouth,
sucking on it.
Although the pump
was already shut
down, there was still
chlordane in the hose,
and a trickle
of the white poison
ran out
from between
Johnny's lips.**

A chill went through Fred. "What'd you spray with? Chlordane?"

"Chlordane, dieldrin, it's all the same. We used 'em all. Do you wear a respirator?"

Fred shook his head. "Don't have any. All we have is these." He got up, walked over to the truck, and pulled one of the paper masks from the dashboard; he held it for the man to see.

The man remained seated, his expression unchanged. "Inspector could shut you down for that."

"Inspector? I've never seen one."

"We used to get one coming around every month or two."

Fred shrugged. "I don't know."

"Me and a buddy used to have our own business, in the evenings and weekends, when we weren't working at Emerson. We had respirators, but we never wore 'em. Didn't think we needed 'em. Then I started having blackouts. I wouldn't know where I was, how I got there. They used to have to lead me to and from my machine. Finally had to put me in the V.A. hospital down in Jackson. They said it was because of the head injury I got during the war, but that hadn't bothered me in fifteen years, and it was never as bad as after the spraying. Then, when I was in the hospital, I heard about a guy in Mississippi who died under a house. I knew it was the poison."

Fred stared at the man uneasily. "I'd like to quit, but jobs are hard to find around here. I need the money."

"You can always get a job at Emerson, or one of the other factories."

"They won't take me. Can't pass the physicals. I have curvature of the spine. It's nothing serious, but they're afraid I'll get hurt and sue them. If I

quit, we won't be able to make payments on our farm. We'll lose it."

"Better than losing your mind or your life."

When Johnny came out from under the house, Fred told him about the man from next door, who was still sitting under the tree, watching them. "Shit," said Johnny, "this stuff won't hurt you. I been doin' this for two years now, and it ain't never bothered me. That guy's just crazy. If all that really happened, then how could he remember any of it?"

"I don't know. He said something about loss of short-term memory. I guess he can still remember things that happened a long time ago." Fred shook his head. "I don't know."

"Look, I'll show you." Johnny took the spray gun and put it in his mouth, sucking on it. Although the pump was already shut down, there was still chlordane in the hose, and as Fred watched, a trickle of the white poison ran out from between Johnny's lips. Johnny took the gun from his mouth and swallowed. "See?"

Fred shook his head. "You're crazy!" Already, though, he was trying to convince himself that Johnny was right—because if the job was dangerous, and he told Alice, she would insist that he quit: He couldn't do that; if he quit they wouldn't be able to make the payments, and they would lose the farm.

No, it would be best if he didn't say anything to Alice about what had happened today.

During the next few weeks, Fred thought a lot about the man he had met in McKenzie. It bothered him, but as the days slipped away uneventfully, his anxiety gradually faded. Things were going all right; the farm was slowly being paid off. Why worry about something that would probably never happen?

On a cool, clear afternoon in late September, Fred pulled the pickup into the driveway of a dilapidated house that lay about a mile east of the Jackson Highway. The house was in a hollow not far from the Big Sandy River, and the ground around it was swampy, the trees covered with kudzu. The kudzu had already taken over most of the yard, covering the fences and outbuildings, creeping up the south side of the house. The place smelled of mold and decay.

"Looks deserted," said Johnny, squinting out from under the brim of his hat. The porch sagged; the windows were broken or boarded up, the weathered paint peeling. The only signs of life were the starlings roosting on the chimney.

"Yeah. Well, it's on the list. Guess we better do it."

"Go ahead. I'll wait right here. This hangover's killin' me."

The Man Who Couldn't Remember

Fred shrugged, got out, and donned the coveralls, sticking a mask and the flashlight in his pocket. He looked at the house. It appeared to be sitting right on the ground. Swearing softly to himself, he grabbed the shovel from the back of the truck.

He walked all the way around, but the biggest gap he could find between house and ground was less than six inches. It took ten minutes for him to dig out a hole big enough for him to get under.

"Jeez," he said to Johnny, when he got back to the truck, "bet this place is crawling with termites." The straw hat tilted almost imperceptibly in agreement.

Fred threw the shovel into the back of the truck with a loud crash and yanked the pump motor to life, but Johnny never stirred. Well, thought Fred, that's okay, see if I help him any at the next place. He grabbed the spray gun and walked back to the house, the hose snaking out of the back of the truck behind him.

Underneath the house it was damp and musty, but once Fred had gotten through the hole there was a surprising amount of overhead. He played the flashlight around. There were small pale mushrooms everywhere, and the joists were riddled with termite tunnels. It had been a long time since anyone had sprayed this place. The ground sloped down toward the center of the house, and Fred moved in that direction, hoping there would be enough clearance to sit up and spray.

As he got closer he saw that a pit about six feet across lay at the center of the house. As he neared the edge he could hear a noise coming from the pit, a wet smacking sound that came at regular intervals. It sent shivers through him, awakening some instinctual, unreasoning fear. He hesitated, afraid to draw still closer; the pit was now less than a yard away. Finally, deciding he was being ridiculous, he pushed himself forward those last few feet.

What he saw when he shone the flashlight into it almost made him retch. The pit was almost as deep as it was wide, with more than a dozen tunnels, each about a foot in diameter, opening into it. Moving in and out of the tunnels were pale grublike creatures about a foot in length. The focus of their activity was a great white gelatinous mass at the center of the pit, a bloated, unmoving monstrosity—the queen. This was the source of the smacking sound, the noise being produced by the emission of eggs from an orifice at one end of its body. As each egg emerged, a waiting grub grasped it with pincers and slowly oozed away down one of the tunnels.

In a flurry of fear and revulsion, Fred turned the spray gun toward the pit and shot a steady stream of poison on the creatures below, concentrating on the queen. Chlordane ran off its body in

rivulets, gleaming in the beam of the flashlight. Beads of deadly vapor filled the air, until Fred began to choke on the fumes. Convulsed by a fit of coughing, he dropped the gun.

The poison seemed to have no effect. The great queen continued to pump eggs, the grubs continued to carry them off. Two of the grubs approached a puddle of chlordane that had formed at the bottom of the pit, extruded thin tubular membranes from between their pincers, and dipped them into the milky fluid. In moments the pool had disappeared; the tubes withdrew. One of the grubs crawled over to the queen, and the tube came out again, penetrating the already-bloated body. The other grub began to move toward Fred.

At the same moment, Fred felt something drop onto his back.

Before he could react, a pair of sharp pincers were piercing the skin, penetrating his spinal cord. In seconds he was paralyzed.

His head hung over the edge of the pit; the flashlight, grasped in his dead hand, still shone below. With growing horror he watched as the grub climbed slowly up the wall of the pit, approaching him. He could see every detail—the whitish purple gleam of its segmented body, the many short legs on its underside which propelled it forward, the dark red head with its hairlike sensors and cruel pincers . . .

Now it was only inches from his face.

The pincers grasped his head, sinking into the bony ridge around his eye, causing him to cry out in pain. The tube emerged, penetrating the lid above his eye, burning a path through the muscle, enveloping him in darkness.

Now, for Fred, there is only the present. Dimly, far in the past, he can remember a time when things were different; but that time is only a dream now, a life lived by someone else.

Now he sits and watches tv, and before the show is over he has forgotten how it began. Now he finds notes from Alice telling him that she is at work, that there is lunch in the refrigerator, that she will be home at five-thirty. Now he spends most of the day pulling weeds in the garden or sitting in the rocker on the front porch, watching the birds in the trees across the road.

Sometimes at night, with Alice lying asleep beside him, he can hear something under the house, a wet smacking noise that makes him shiver. At these times he seems closest to that other dim life in the past, and seems on the verge of remembering some horrible truth that he knows is important. But like everything in his life now, the thought soon passes into the fog of forgetfulness, and he rolls over and goes back to sleep, remembering nothing. 17

The Next Time Around



WHEN YOU'RE SPEEDING DOWN THE HIGHWAY AT 70 M.P.H.,
WHAT BETTER TIME TO THINK ABOUT LIFE ... AND DEATH?

Rollo Adams pulled out of the motel parking lot just before dawn. It was best to hit the smooth, hard pavement of the superhighway while the air was still cold and the concrete slightly wet with dew. The souped-up convertible accelerated quickly and smoothly to seventy, and Adams settled in for the last long day of cross-country travel.

As he watched the flat emptiness of the Arizona desert flash by, he felt the wind blow over his tiny bald spot. The old carcass sure did ache! His left side still hurt where the vandal had kicked him yesterday. If somebody hadn't come along just then, the bastard probably would have stuck him with a knife. Damn him! He tried to forget the discomfort by thinking of his destination—the romantic waterfront of San Diego Bay.

The car backfired once, and he wished he had a tachometer so he'd know how many RPMs he was pulling.

The miles pounded by, and Adams—who, as usual in the morning, had felt worn-out, down, deflated—began to feel a good deal better. The heat of the drive smoothed his stiffness away, and his grip on

things was becoming firm again. Thank God the episodes of nausea and dizziness were getting less frequent and severe! For a while he'd been wandering, slipping a bit, but he was gradually gaining experience, and he could handle the pressures of his new life better now.

And what pressures! At first he'd been almost paranoiac about it, always on the watch for danger, never knowing when he might get drilled full of holes! He'd watched all the usual cops and robbers shows on television, sure, but that was just recycled Hollywood fantasy. Now he *really* knew what it meant to be on the run for the rest of his life.

But the thick steel belts he wore around his vital areas reassured him. With body armor like that, it'd take a mighty big slug to rip *him* open! He had a lot of miles of experience on him now. He'd survived some pretty rough banging around these last few weeks, and had learned how well he could bounce back. He'd been pleasantly surprised. He knew he wouldn't blow and lose control. He was tougher, more resilient, than he'd thought.

The road ahead was empty, a ribbon running



by **Paul J. Nahin**

long and straight to the horizon, and so he let his thoughts drift back to last month, when he'd experienced the most traumatic event in his life. Man, the only creature on earth to be aware of the inevitability of his own death, still learns to cope with it. But it's one thing to read of the passing of a stranger, or even of one casually known; it's another when death strikes closer to home and snatches away your wife.

A giant wave of loss swept over Adams as he thought of Sally. God, how he missed her! He sighed quietly to himself as he recalled how the two of them had often joked about what came after death. Crazy things, like coming back as some other person. Sally had always said she wanted to return as a lizard and bask all day on a rock in the sun; she had never liked the cold winters in New England. Adams had chuckled at the thought of his elegant wife sitting on a rock eating flies. When he'd mentioned this to her, she'd frowned momentarily and then declared that it didn't matter, because once she was a lizard, she'd *like* flies!

Half hypnotized by the rhythmic undulation of the road surface, and with nothing else to distract him, Adams continued to remember. He recalled how Sally had laughed at him when he'd suggested that she might come back all right, but not as a lizard. Maybe she'd come back as the rock! That would be

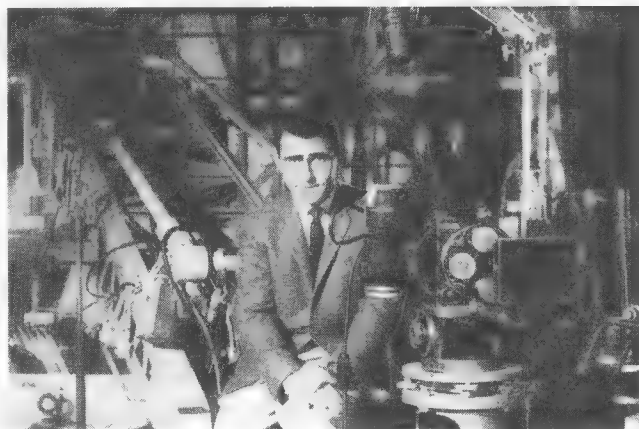
okay, too, she'd replied, tears of silliness running down her face, just as long as she could roast in the sun!

Rollo Adams prayed with all his will that his wife had been granted her request. She'd been so young and beautiful to die in that plane crash; he hoped that her wish had come true. And maybe it had! After all, weren't there religions that said you came back as a higher form if you'd led a virtuous life, and a lower one if you hadn't been so good? Who was to say if a lizard, or even a rock, was higher or lower than man?

Perhaps things had worked out for her; perhaps not. They certainly hadn't for him. Maybe those three or four one-night flings a few years ago were the cause of *his* fate. He'd worshiped Sally, and those few moments of weakness still shamed him. He felt an urge to weep, and almost came undone right there. But then his new strength saved him. He had learned, over the past few weeks, to hold everything inside. To let it all out now would be disastrous.

Rollo Adams, dead in the same crash as Sally, roared down the highway. Instantly responsive to the rear-axle, high-torque differential shaft that spun him, he gripped his sporty rear magnesium rim, dug his zigzag slip-proof treads into the road, and felt the pavement rush past beneath him. The road stretched ahead in the hot sun, and San Diego beckoned. **17**

TV's Twilight Zone: Part Five



CONTINUING MARC SCOTT ZICREE'S
SHOW-BY-SHOW GUIDE TO THE ENTIRE
TWILIGHT ZONE TELEVISION SERIES,
COMPLETE WITH ROD SERLING'S OPENING
AND CLOSING NARRATIONS

"There is a fifth dimension, beyond that which is known to man. It is a dimension as vast as space and as timeless as infinity. It is the middle ground between light and shadow, between science and superstition, and it lies between the pit of man's fears and the summit of his knowledge. It is an area which we call The Twilight Zone."



48. DUST

Written by Rod Serling
Producer: Buck Houghton
Director: Douglas Heyes
Dir. of Photography: George T. Clemens
Music: Jerry Goldsmith
Cast
Sykes: Thomas Gomez
Sheriff Koch: John Larch
Gallegos: Vladimir Sokoloff
Luis Gallegos: John Alonso
Mr. Canfield: Paul Genge
Estrelita: Andrea Margolis
Mrs. Canfield: Dorothy Adams
Rogers: Duane Grey
Man #1: John Lormer
Man #2: Daniel White
Farmer Boy: Douglas Heyes, Jr.

"There was a village, built of crumbling clay and rotting wood, and it squatted ugly under the broiling sun like a sick and mangy animal waiting to die. This village had a virus, shared by its people. It was the germ of squalor, of hopelessness, of a loss of faith. For the faithless, the hopeless, the misery-laden, there is time, ample time, to engage in one of the other pursuits of men—they begin to destroy themselves."

It is the day that Luis Gallegos is to be hanged for running over and killing a little girl while driving his wagon drunk. A conscienceless peddler named Sykes—who sold the hangman the brand-new five-strand hemp for the noose—tells the condemned man's father that a small bag of "magic dust" can turn hate into love. The dust is really no more than common dirt, but Luis's anguished father pays Sykes one hundred pesos for it and throws the dust on the crowd waiting before the gallows, crying, "You must pay

heed to the magic!" It seems to have no effect. The noose is fitted around Luis's neck, the trap is sprung—but, as if by magic, the rope breaks! The parents of the little girl, deciding that there has been enough death, pardon Luis, who leaves with his grateful father. The crowd disperses. Astounded by what he has seen, Sykes stares at the broken rope—then tosses the hundred pesos to Luis's young siblings. The magic has worked on him, too.

"It was a very small, misery-laden village on the day of a hanging, and of little historical consequence. And if there's any moral to it at all, let's say that in any quest for magic, in any search for sorcery, witchery, legerdemain, first check the human heart. For inside this deep place there's a wizardry that costs far more than a few pieces of gold. Tonight's case in point—in the Twilight Zone."



49. BACK THERE

Written by Rod Serling
 Producer: Buck Houghton
 Director: David Orrick McDearmon
 Dir. of Photography: George T. Clemens
 Music: Jerry Goldsmith
 Cast
 Peter Corrigan: Russell Johnson
 William: Bartlett Robinson
 Police Sergeant: Paul Hartman
 Policeman: James Gavin
 John Wilkes Booth: John Lasell
 Patrolman: James Lydon
 Jackson: Raymond Greenleaf
 With: Ray Bailey, John Eldredge,
 Fred Kruger, Jean Inness, Lew
 Brown, Carol Rossen, Nora Marlowe,
 Pat O'Malley

"Witness a theoretical argument, Washington, D.C., the present. Four intelligent men talking about an improbable thing like going back in time. A friendly debate revolving around a simple question: could a human being change what happened before? Interesting and theoretical, because who ever heard of a man going back in time—before tonight, that is. Because this is... the Twilight Zone."

It is April 14, 1961. After discussing time travel at his men's club, Peter Corrigan suddenly feels an inexplicable dizziness. When it clears, he sees that he has moved back in time to April 14, 1865—the date of Lincoln's assassination. In attempting to warn those at Ford's Theater, he succeeds only in getting himself arrested as either a drunk or a lunatic. A "Mr. Wellington" asks that Corrigan be remanded to his custody. Soon, his motives become clear: Wellington is actually John Wilkes Booth, and he wants no interference. He takes

Corrigan to his room and drugs him. By the time Corrigan revives, it is too late; Lincoln has been shot. He returns to the present, intent on telling his friends that the past can't be changed. But at the men's club he gets a shock: William, formerly the attendant, is now a wealthy man. It turns out that his great-grandfather—the only policeman who believed Corrigan—gained a name for himself in trying to stop Lincoln's assassination, rose in politics, and became a millionaire. Corrigan *has* changed the past, but not in the way he intended.

"Mr. Peter Corrigan, lately returned from a place 'back there,' a journey into time with highly questionable results, proving on one hand that the threads of history are woven tightly and the skein of events cannot be undone, but on the other hand there are small fragments of tapestry that can be altered. Tonight's thesis to be taken as you will, in the Twilight Zone."



50. THE WHOLE TRUTH

Written by Rod Serling
 Producer: Buck Houghton
 Director: James Sheldon
 Videotape—no director of photography
 No music credit
 Cast
 Harvey Hennicut: Jack Carson
 Honest Luther Grimbley: Loring Smith
 Irv: Arte Johnson
 Nikita Khrushchev: Lee Sabinson
 Old Man: George Chandler
 Young Man: Jack Ging
 Young Woman: Nan Peterson
 Translator: Patrick Westwood

"This, as the banner already has proclaimed, is Mr. Harvey Hennicut, an expert on commerce and con jobs, a brash, bright, and larceny-loaded wheeler and dealer who, when the good Lord passed out a conscience, must have gone for a beer and missed out. And these are a couple of other characters in our story: a little old man and a Model A car—but not just any old man and not just any Model A. There's something very special about the both of them. As a matter of fact, in just a few moments they'll give Harvey Hennicut something that he's never experienced before. Through the good offices of a little magic, they will unload on Mr. Hennicut the absolute necessity to tell the truth. Exactly where they come from is conjecture, but as to where they're heading for, this we know, because all of them—and you—are on the threshold of the Twilight Zone."

Hennicut, an unscrupulous used-car dealer, is sold a Model A that compels its owner to tell the absolute truth.

Consequently, he can't sell a single car. When a politician shows interest in the car, Hennicut tells him of the spell. The man won't buy it, but he names several colleagues he'd like to hear tell the truth. Then Hennicut manages to unload the car on someone he thinks will be embarrassed by the truth—Nikita Khrushchev!

"Couldn't happen, you say? Farfetched? Way out? Tilt-of-center? Possible. But the next time you buy an automobile that happens to look as if it had just gone through the battle of the Marne, and the seller is ready to throw into the bargain one of his arms, be particularly careful in explaining to the boss about your grandmother's funeral when you were actually at Chavez Ravine watching the Dodgers. It'll be a fact that you are actually the proud possessor of an instrument of truth manufactured and distributed by an exclusive dealer... in the Twilight Zone."



51. THE INVADERS

Written by Richard Matheson
 Producer: Buck Houghton
 Director: Douglas Heyes
 Dir. of Photography: George T. Clemens
 Music: Jerry Goldsmith
 Cast

Woman: Agnes Moorhead
 Voice of Astronaut: Douglas Heyes

"This is one of the out-of-the-way places, the unvisited places, bleak, wasted, dying. This is a farmhouse, handmade, crude, a house without electricity or gas, a house untouched by progress. This is the woman who lives in the house, a woman who's been alone for many years, a strong, simple woman whose only problem up until this moment has been that of acquiring enough food to eat, a woman about to face terror which is even now coming at her from . . . the Twilight Zone."

Hearing a strange sound on her roof, the woman goes up to investigate — and sees a miniature flying saucer, out of which emerge two tiny, robotlike creatures. A battle for survival ensues, with the creatures tormenting the woman with a ray gun and one of her own kitchen knives. Finally, she manages to grab hold of one, battering it into lifelessness. With an ax, she destroys the saucer and the remaining creature within. Before he is killed, he

sends a message to his home planet not to send more ships to this world of giants. The lettering on the side of the saucer reads — U.S. Air Force!

"These are the invaders, the tiny beings from the tiny place called Earth, who would take the giant step across the sky to the question marks that sparkle and beckon from the vastness of the universe only to be imagined. The invaders, who found out that a one-way ticket to the stars beyond has the ultimate price tag. And we have just seen it entered in a ledger that covers all the transactions of the universe, a bill stamped 'paid in full,' and to be found . . . in the Twilight Zone."



52. A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

Written by George Clayton Johnson
 Producer: Buck Houghton
 Director: James Sheldon
 Dir. of Photography: George T. Clemens
 No music credit
 Cast

Hector B. Poole: Dick York
 Miss Turner: June Dayton
 Mr. Bagby: Dan Tobin
 Mr. Smithers: Cyril Delevanti
 Mr. Sykes: Hayden Rorke
 Mr. Brand: Harry Jackson
 Driver: Frank London
 Newsboy: Anthony Ray

"Mr. Hector B. Poole, resident of the Twilight Zone. Flip a coin and keep flipping it. What are the odds? Half the time it will come up heads, half the time tails. But in one freakish chance in a million, it'll land on its edge. Mr. Hector B. Poole, a bright human coin — on his way to the bank."

After paying for a paper with a coin that lands on edge, mild bank clerk Hector Poole finds he has the power to read people's minds — but it gives him nothing but trouble. He discovers that Sykes, a businessman applying for a sizable loan, intends to bet it on the horses in a desperate attempt to repay embezzled funds. Sykes storms out of the bank — an act that greatly displeases Bagby, Poole's boss. Then Poole overhears Smithers, an old and trusted bank employee, contemplating going into the vault, filling his briefcase with money, and escaping to Bermuda. Poole tells Bagby, who searches Smithers's briefcase and finds travel folders, a sandwich, and a pair of socks. Smithers's thoughts

were no more than a recurring daydream. Poole is fired. Miss Turner, who has a crush on Poole, tries to console him, but she doesn't know what to think of his claim that he's telepathic. Just then, Bagby rushes up. Sykes has been arrested — Poole was right. He offers Poole his old job back. Miss Turner sends Poole the thought that he should press for a promotion. Using information he's gained telepathically about Bagby's weekend plans with his mistress, he blackmails Bagby into making him an office manager and giving Smithers a free trip to Bermuda. As he leaves with Miss Turner, Poole stops to buy a paper and tosses a coin that knocks his previous coin off its edge — and removes his telepathic powers.

"One time in a million, a coin will land on its edge, but all it takes to knock it over is a vagrant breeze, a vibration, or a slight blow. Hector B. Poole, a human coin, on edge for a brief time — in the Twilight Zone."



53. TWENTY-TWO

Written by Rod Serling
Based on an anecdote in *Famous Ghost Stories*, edited by Bennett Cerf
Producer: Buck Houghton
Director: Jack Smight
Videotape — no director of photography
No music credit

Cast
Liz Powell: Barbara Nichols
Doctor: Jonathan Harris
Nurse/Stewardess: Arline Sax
Barney: Fredd Wayne
Night Duty Nurse: Norma Connolly
Day Duty Nurse: Mary Adams
With Wesley Lau, Joe Sargent, Jay Overholts, Carole Conn

"This is Miss Liz Powell. She's a professional dancer and she's in the hospital as a result of overwork and nervous fatigue. And at this moment we have just finished walking with her in a nightmare. In a moment she'll wake up and we'll remain at her side. The problem here is that both Miss Powell and you will reach a point where it might be difficult to decide which is reality and which is nightmare, a problem uncommon, perhaps, but rather peculiar to the Twilight Zone."

In the hospital, Miss Powell has a recurring vision in which she follows a nurse to Room 22—the morgue—at which point the nurse, who is disturbingly beautiful, throws open the door, smiles ominously, and says, "Room for one more, honey." Miss Powell is convinced that these events are real, but her doctor and her agent believe they are no more than a bad dream. This seems even more certain when it is pointed out that the

morgue's night nurse is *not* the woman she saw. Finally, Miss Powell is discharged from the hospital. Arriving at the airport to board a nonstop flight to Miami, she experiences a sense of *déjà vu*—the plane is Flight 22! Boarding, she is horrified to see that the stewardess is the nurse in her vision. The woman smiles at her and says, "Room for one more, honey." Screaming hysterically, Miss Powell runs back to the airport lounge. The plane takes off without her—and explodes in midair.

"Miss Elizabeth Powell, professional dancer. Hospital diagnosis: acute anxiety brought on by overwork and fatigue. Prognosis: with rest and care, she'll probably recover. But the cure to some nightmares is not to be found in known medical journals. You look for it under 'Potions for Bad Dreams'—to be found in the Twilight Zone."



54. THE ODYSSEY OF FLIGHT 33

Written by Rod Serling
Producer: Buck Houghton
Director: Justus Addiss
Dir. of Photography: George T. Clemens
No music credit

Cast
Capt. Farver: John Anderson
1st Officer Craig: Paul Comi
Flight Engineer Purcell: Harp McGuire
2nd Officer Wyatt: Wayne Heffley
Navigator Hatch: Sandy Kenyon
Paula: Nancy Rennick
Jane: Beverly Brown
RAF Man: Lester Fletcher
Lady on Plane: Betty Garde
Passenger: Jay Overholts

"You're riding on a jet airliner en route from London to New York. You're at 35,000 feet atop an overcast and roughly fifty-five minutes from Idlewild Airport. But what you've seen occur inside the cockpit of this plane is no reflection on the aircraft or the crew. It's a safe, well-engineered, perfectly designed machine, and the men you've just met are a trained, cool, highly efficient team. The problem is simply that the plane is going too fast and there is nothing within the realm of knowledge, or at least logic, to explain it. Unbeknownst to passengers and crew, this airplane is heading into an uncharted region well off the track of commercial travelers—it's moving into the Twilight Zone. What you're about to see we call 'The Odyssey of Flight 33.'"

After picking up a freak tail wind that accelerates the plane past 3,000 knots and through a shock wave, the crew is unable to raise anyone on the radio. Descending to below the cloud cover to get a bearing, they see Manhattan

Island, but it is devoid of buildings and populated by dinosaurs. Somehow, they have gone back in time. Their only chance to return to their own time is to try to recapture that tail wind. They succeed in this, and when they descend again they see the familiar skyline of New York City. But all is not well. The crew spies the periscope and trylon of the 1939 New York World's Fair. The plane ascends in one final attempt to get back home. "A Global jet airliner, en route from London to New York on an uneventful afternoon in the year 1961, but now reported overdue and missing, and by now searched for on land, sea, and air by anguished human beings fearful of what they'll find. But you and I know where she is, you and I know what's happened. So if some moment, any moment, you hear the sound of jet engines flying atop the overcast—engines that sound searching and lost, engines that sound desperate—shoot up a flare or do something. That would be Global 33 trying to get home—from the Twilight Zone."



55. MR. DINGLE, THE STRONG

Written by Rod Serling
 Producer: Buck Houghton
 Dir. of Photography: George T. Clemens
 No music credit

Cast

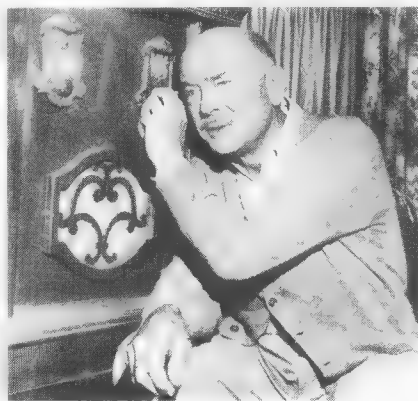
Luther Dingle: Burgess Meredith
 Bettor: Don Rickles
 O'Toole: James Westerfield
 Callahan: Edward Ryder
 1st Martian: Douglas Spencer
 2nd Martian: Michael Fox
 Abernathy: James Millhollin
 Boy: Jay Hector
 With Donald Losby, Greg Irwin, Phil Arnold, Douglas Evans, Frank Richards, Jo Ann Dixon, Bob Duggan

"This is Mr. Luther Dingle, a vacuum-cleaner salesman whose volume of business is roughly that of a valet at a hobo convention. He's a consummate failure in almost everything but is a good listener and has a prominent jaw . . . And these two unseen gentlemen are visitors from outer space. They are about to alter the destiny of Luther Dingle by leaving him a legacy, the kind you can't hardly find no more. In just a moment, a sad-faced perennial punching bag who missed even the caboose of life's gravy train will take a short constitutional into that most unpredictable region that we refer to as the Twilight Zone."

As an experiment, a couple of Martians (two heads, but one body) give Dingle the strength of 300 men. Discovering his new power, he performs such amazing tricks as lifting a statue and tearing boulders in two. Newspapers and the general public take notice. In the bar, he prepares to perform a feat of strength

for those assembled as well as for a live TV audience: lifting the entire building. Just then, the Martians, appalled by his foolish behavior, remove his strength. Dingle becomes a laughing stock. As the Martians exit, they encounter two Venusians in search of an Earthling on whom to perform an intelligence experiment. The Martians recommend Dingle. The Venusians boost his intelligence 300 fold—and away we go again.

"Exit Mr. Luther Dingle, formerly vacuum-cleaner salesman, strongest man on Earth, and now mental giant. These latter powers will very likely be eliminated before too long, but Mr. Dingle has an appeal to extraterrestrial note-takers as well as to frustrated and insolvent bet-losers. Offhand, I'd say that he was in for a great deal of extremely odd periods, simply because there are so many inhabited planets who send down observers, and also because of course Mr. Dingle lives his life with one foot in his mouth—and the other in the Twilight Zone."



56. STATIC

Written by Charles Beaumont
 Based on an unpublished story by OCee Ritch
 Producer: Buck Houghton
 Director: Buzz Kulik
 Videotape—no director of photography
 No music credit

Cast

Ed Lindsay: Dean Jagger
 Vinnie Broun: Carmen Mathews
 Prof. Ackerman: Robert Emhardt
 With Alice Pearce, Arch W. Johnson, Stephen Talbot, Lillian O'Malley, Pat O'Malley, Clegg Hoyt, Jerry Fuller, Eddie Marr, Diane Strom, Bob Crane, Roy Rowan, Bob Duggan, Jay Overholts

"No one ever saw one quite like that, because that's a very special sort of radio. In its day, circa 1935, its type was one of the most elegant consoles on the market. Now, with its fabric-covered speakers, its peculiar yellow dial, its serrated knobs, it looks quaint and a little strange. Mr. Ed Lindsay is going to find out how strange very soon—when he tunes in to the Twilight Zone."

Disgusted by television, Lindsay, a cantankerous old bachelor, retrieves his old radio from the basement of the boarding house where he lives and installs it in his room. He soon finds that it can receive programs from the past, but only when he's alone. Vinnie Broun, an old maid to whom he was once engaged, is convinced he hears the shows only in his mind, the result of a profound nostalgia to go back to the days when the two of them had a chance for happiness. Lindsay utterly rejects this view and isolates himself with the radio. Out of concern for his sanity, Vinnie gives the radio to the

junk dealer. But Lindsay is furious and retrieves it, praying that it still works. It does indeed. When he calls Vinnie to come listen, it is an adoring, younger Vinnie who appears. The year is 1940, and Lindsay—himself a young man again—has been given a second chance.

"Around and around she goes, and where she stops nobody knows. All Ed Lindsay knows is that he desperately wanted a second chance and he finally got it, through a strange and wonderful time machine called a radio . . . in the Twilight Zone." 17



The Odyssey of Flight 33

by Rod Serling

THE ORIGINAL
TELEVISION SCRIPT
FIRST AIRED ON CBS-TV
FEBRUARY 24, 1961

T Z C L A S S I C T E L E P L A Y

1. STANDARD ROAD OPENING

With vehicle smashing into letters, propulsion into starry night then PAN DOWN TO OPENING SHOT OF PLAY.

2. FILM CLIP A BOEING 707 JET FLYING OVER OCEAN

If possible, the most effective introduction to the story and aircraft would be a shot through clouds as the aircraft barrels in toward the camera and then zooms past overhead.

DISSOLVE TO:

3. INT. COCKPIT DAY FULL SHOT THE AREA

As seen from the flight deck door leading toward the lounge cabin. The CAMERA THEN MOVES IN FOR A PAN SHOT around the faces of the crew. First Purcell, the Flight Engineer, continuing around to the First Officer, Craig, alongside to Farver, the Pilot, then over to the other side of the room to Wyatt, the Second Officer, and alongside of him Hatch, the Navigator.

4. MED. CLOSE SHOT CAPTAIN FARVER

As he makes a visual sweep of the instrument panel then leans to the right a bit to adjust the trim tab. He looks over his shoulder to the Navigator.

FARVER

Hey, Magellan, how about a flight progress report?

HATCH

Coming up, Skipper. We'll be about four minutes behind flight plan at 30 degrees west.

5. MED. CLOSE SHOT SECOND OFFICER WYATT

Who removes his earphones.

WYATT

Captain, Gander wants to know if you intend an altitude change after we pass 30 west?

FARVER

Advise Gander negative.

The Navigator takes a sheet of paper off of a clip board and hands it to the Flight Engineer who scans it briefly then hands it to the Captain.

FARVER

(grinning)

Gentlemen, you'll be pleased to know that thanks to the quality of this aircraft, the fine weather, and my brilliant flying, we'll hit Idlewild on schedule if our speed holds up.

(he hands the report to the Second Officer)

Send it in, Wyatt.

The Second Officer takes the report, puts on his earphones, flicks on a switch and then talks into the mike.

WYATT

Shannon, Shannon, copy Gander... Trans-Ocean flight 33, position 50 north, 30 west, time 14-OH-3... flight level 35,000. Estimating 52 north, 40 west and 14-31. Estimating Idlewild 18-30. Endurance 7-9-5-6-OH. Temperature minus 47. Acknowledge, Shannon.

(he listens for a moment then looks up)

Report received, Skipper!

6. DIFFERENT ANGLE THE AREA

As Jane Braden, Senior Stewardess on board, comes in through the flight deck door,

shutting it behind her.

CRAIG

How we doin' back there,
Janie?

JANE

Your passengers are highly content. But on behalf of the stewardesses, we would like to respectfully request that we get to New York as soon as possible. One's going to the opera, three have heavy dates, and the fourth is available to any honorable and single male crew member!

There's laughter at this as the CAMERA MOVES PAST THE VARIOUS CREW MEMBERS until suddenly it stops on Captain Farver, who seems to stiffen and then holds up a right hand.

FARVER

(tersely)

Hold it a minute!

7. DIFFERENT ANGLE THE CREW

As they each stop, stock still, staring toward the Captain. He looks off to the left staring at nothing in particular, but obviously listening to or feeling something.

FARVER

(turns to First Officer)

You feel anything?

Craig listens for a moment then turns back to Farver.

CRAIG

Feel anything? No. What do you mean, Skipper?

FARVER

(shakes his head)

I don't know. I felt something. Something funny. Like a sensation of speed. I... I can't even put my finger on it.

(then he seems to relax)

I guess I'm getting old.

CRAIG

(glances at the instruments)

True airspeed 440, Skipper. We're level. Do you suppose we picked up a tail wind?



FARVER

(looks down at the instruments)

Maybe. Those jet streams are tricky. But it's that... that crazy feeling I can't shake. You can't feel a tail wind. But I feel something!

CRAIG

(shakes his head and again checks the instruments)

Everything looks fine, Skipper.

FARVER

(over his shoulder to the Navigator)

Magellan, give us a speed check with your Loran.

HATCH

Right.

The CAMERA MOVES OVER TO HIM as he works with the Loran briefly then looks up, a puzzled expression on his face.

HATCH

I'd better do it again.

JANE

What's going on—

HATCH

(waves her quiet)

Hold it a minute.

(he checks the Loran again, is now obviously worried as well as puzzled. He looks back over toward the Captain)

Skipper, Loran indicates a

ground speed of 830 knots. I've never heard of a tail wind like that.

FARVER

Check it again.

(then he turns to Wyatt)

See if you can raise OSV Charlie, air defense radar. Ask them to give us a fix and check our ground speed.

(then over his shoulder toward Navigator)

Magellan, you sure about that Loran?

HATCH

(looking down at it again)

Skipper, I'm not only sure—but we're still accelerating. 980 now. (he keeps hunched over his Loran)

1120. 1500.

(he wets his lips, his face going white)

God in heaven, I can't even keep up with it!

FARVER

(looks toward Wyatt)

Anything from air defense?

WYATT

No, sir, I can't raise them.

HATCH

(half rises in his seat, his voice awed)

2100.

CRAIG

I hope the wings stay on.

FARVER

(grimly)

They will. Don't worry about the wings—just watch that true air speed. Ground speed means nothing. We're just in one lulu of a jet stream!

He glances down at the instruments and shakes his head, then looks again in complete and utter disbelief, then over his shoulder to the Navigator.

FARVER

Magellan! My needle just reversed on Gander Omni. How could we get past Gander? Give me a fast position check.

8. CLOSE SHOT HATCH

As he takes a fix on the sun through an astrodome.

HATCH

Skipper—we are past Gander. We must be doing 3000 knots.

9. PAN SHOT AROUND THE ROOM

As the crew, almost like a flock of frightened children, turn as if by direction toward the Captain. The Captain hesitates a moment, then looks to Wyatt.

FARVER

Try to raise Harmon control. If you can't raise them, try Moncton or Boston. And at this speed you might as well try to get Idlewild.

CAMERA MOVES AROUND so that it is facing the Captain as behind him we hear Wyatt into the mike.

WYATT

Trans-Ocean 33. Harmon control, come in please ... Harmon, please acknowledge. Trans-Ocean 33 Moncton ... Trans-Ocean 33 ... Boston Control, come in please ... Trans-Ocean 33 to Idlewild control ... can you hear us please.

(he lowers the mike, hesitates for a moment, biting his lip, then turns to the Captain his voice almost haunted)

No soap. I can't raise anyone.

10. PAN SHOT AROUND THE GROUP AGAIN

As each face suddenly shows a rising, nightmarish tension.

DISSOLVE TO:

11. EXT. SKY CLOUDS FILM CLIP OF PLANE

As it moves atop the overcast.

SERLING'S VOICE (o.c.)

You're riding on a jet airliner en route from London to New York. You're at thirty-five thousand feet atop an overcast and roughly fifty-five minutes from Idlewild Airport. But what you've been witnessing occur inside the cockpit of this plane is no reflection on the aircraft or the crew. It's a safe, well-engineered, perfectly designed machine. And the men you've just met are a trained, cool, highly efficient team. The problem is simply that the plane is going too fast and there is nothing within the realm of knowledge ... or at least logic ... to explain it.

DISSOLVE THRU TO

12. INT. PLANE DOLLY DOWN AISLE UNTIL WE REACH SERLING

In the very back seat of the first class cabin. He looks up to face the camera.

SERLING

Unbeknownst to passenger and crew, this airplane is heading into an uncharted region well off the beaten track of commercial travelers. It's moving into the Twilight Zone. What you're about to see ... we call "The Odyssey of Flight 33."

FADE TO BLACK:

OPENING BILLBOARD
FIRST COMMERCIAL

FADE ON:

13. INT. PASSENGER LOUNGE DAY

Jane Braden comes out from the cockpit, shutting the flight deck

door behind her. Her assistant stewardess, Paula Temple, is just putting some coffee on a tray in the small galley adjoining the lounge.

14. MED. CLOSE SHOT PAULA

PAULA

I hope you prodded the fly people. I'm seeing The Ride of the Valkyrie tonight.

The smile and lightness leaves her face as she stares into Jane Braden's features.

15. CLOSE SHOT JANE

We see the pinched whiteness of a human being desperately trying to stifle an enveloping fear that is taking a hold of her.

16. REVERSE ANGLE LOOKING TOWARD PAULA

As she forces a smile, her voice taking on a different tone.

PAULA

Janie ... I've always had a thing about Valhalla. Be a good egg and tell me I'll be there in time for the curtain.

Jane looks briefly at the single passenger in the lounge, then takes Paula's arm and firmly guides her into the galley section so that they can't be heard.

17. DIFFERENT ANGLE THE TWO OF THEM

Their faces close together.

JANE

Let me put it to you this way. It's my most earnest wish that the Valhalla you're talking about is at the Metropolitan Opera on Seventh Avenue and 57th Street in little old New York.

18. CLOSE SHOT PAULA

As seen from over Jane's shoulder, her voice is very still.

PAULA

Instead of?

19. REVERSE ANGLE LOOKING TOWARD JANE

JANE

(quietly)

Instead of ... a conducted tour

into the real thing.
(she bites her lip)

We're in trouble.

20. TWO SHOT

PAULA

How bad?

JANE

They don't know yet.

(then looking down at Paula's tray)

Go ahead and serve it.

Paula, with a jerk, lifts up the tray in shaking hands and starts to move out.

JANE

Paula—I...

Paula turns to her.

JANE

Like... coffee, tea or milk...
and with a smile.

21. DIFFERENT ANGLE PAULA

As she forces a tight smile, grips the tray tighter.

PAULA

You got a deal. But I wish I'd gone to acting school.

She turns and carries the tray past the lounge into the first class cabin.

22. TRACK SHOT WITH HER

As she walks down the aisle.

23. DIFFERENT ANGLE AN ELDERLY WOMAN

Sitting next to a British officer in an RAF uniform. After Paula passes them, the CAMERA MOVES IN FOR A TWO SHOT OF THEM. The woman is a lippy, loquacious, typical perennial tourist.

WOMAN

(in the middle of an incredibly long discourse)

You know, you talk about ailments. I had an aunt once in Boise, Idaho, who had one of the worst livers in the medical history of the state. When that woman passed on, rest her soul, would you believe it? There was five medical associations bidding just to get her liver in a bottle on display. But her

mother... that's my father's sister... absolutely refused to let them show her liver. And it's like I always said to my late husband—

(she suddenly stares at the epaulets on the officer's shoulders and without missing a beat)

What'd you say you was?

OFFICER

(through drooping lids)

A captain, madam. I'm a military attaché at our British embassy in Los Angeles.

WOMAN

Now isn't that wonderful.

Nephew of mine was in the Navy during the Second World War. He was on a cruiser or a PT boat or something like that. Or was it a battleship?

CAMERA PANS OVER for a close shot of the RAF officer as he suddenly looks away, then looks first at the front of the ship and then to its rear, then back to the woman.

OFFICER

Did you feel anything?

WOMAN

Well, I felt a little queasy when we took off, but my late husband used to say that I had a stomach like a—

24. DIFFERENT CLOSE SHOT RAF OFFICER

As he looks out toward the wing.

OFFICER

That's odd. That's really quite odd. I felt a sensation of... a sensation of speed or something. Acceleration.

ABRUPT CUT TO:

25. CLOSE SHOT PAULA'S HANDS

As she takes a tray out of one of the passenger's hands. The tray is shaking. The cup on it tips and almost goes over on its side.

THE PASSENGER

(a middle-aged man)

Got a little nerves, miss?

PAULA

(with a forced high, uneven laugh)

Heavy date in New York. Little shook up.

THE PASSENGER

(laughs)

I don't blame you then.

26. DIFFERENT ANGLE PAULA

As she gets the tray, turns in the aisle, stops, closes her eyes as if saying some kind of wordless prayer, then collects herself, forces a smile and starts back toward the galley.

DISSOLVE TO:

27. INT. COCKPIT

In this compartment the tension has almost physical properties. It's like a block of some kind of cutable material. All eyes are on the Captain except Hatch the Navigator who continues to study the Loran, shaking his head in disbelief as each moment passes.

28. PAN SHOT OVER TO SECOND OFFICER WYATT

Who speaks quietly into the mike then starts to fiddle with some dials.

CAPTAIN

What about it?

WYATT

(shaking his head)

Not a thing, sir. Not a bloody thing. Either they're off whack... everybody out there...

(then meaningfully)

Or we are.

CRAIG

Check your equipment again.

WYATT

(his voice rising)

I've checked it four times—

FARVER

(interrupting)

Knock it off. We'll just have to bull it through and see if anything—

29. DIFFERENT ANGLE COCKPIT

As there is suddenly a blinding flash of white light. The cockpit shudders and bucks.



30-35. SERIES OF CUTS TO VARIOUS CREW MEMBERS

The Flight Engineer is tossed from his seat. The Navigator is thrown forward. The clip boards tumble down on his head. Both pilot and co-pilot instinctively reach for controls. The light dissipates as quickly as it came.

CRAIG

Did we hit something?

FARVER

(tersely)

I don't know. Check for damage!

36. DIFFERENT ANGLE CRAIG

As he looks out of the side window.

CRAIG

Numbers three and four are still on the wing. They look okay.

37. TWO SHOT

FARVER

(turning back from his own side)

Ditto one and two. Everything seems in one piece.

(he turns to Purcell)

Purcell, go aft and check for any cabin damage. Report back as fast as you can. I'll get on the horn and try to calm everybody

down if they need calming. Tell the girls to stay with it.

(then turning back to instrument panel he says softly)

We're in trouble. But I don't know what kind of trouble.

38. CLOSE SHOT HATCH

HATCH

That light. That crazy light. What was it?

39. CLOSE SHOT FARVER

As his eyes scan the instrument panel.

FARVER

That's something we'll have to find out.

(then turning toward First Officer)

And quick too.

CRAIG

What was that shaking—turbulence?

FARVER

I doubt it. It was more like a... like a...

CRAIG

Like a what?

FARVER

(turning away, wetting his lips)

Like a sound shock wave. As if we'd gone past the speed of sound.

CRAIG

(incredulous)

You mean we hit Mach 1? We broke the sound barrier? We didn't get any Mach 1 warning.

FARVER

We probably wouldn't—not with the true air speed of only 440. I don't know what it was. I just don't know. Magellan's last speed fix showed 3,000 knots. We could have broken some kind of sound barrier, but...

Then turning very slowly in his seat and looking from face to face.

40. PAN SHOT AROUND FACES OF THE MEN

Winding up with the same close shot of Farver again.

FARVER

But not any sound barrier I've ever heard of before.

(he wipes his mouth with the back of his hand)

Magellan, can you give me a Loran fix now?

41. CLOSE SHOT HATCH

HATCH

(after checking his equipment, looks up)

Whatever that bump was, Skipper—it's really knocked out everything. Loran's inoperative.

CRAIG

Altimeter and rate of climb steady, Skipper.

WYATT

(in the b.g. has been fiddling with the mike and radio dials)

Skipper, I still can't raise Gander or Moncton or Boston or anybody. It's like I said... either they're off the air or we are... or both!

42. CLOSE SHOT FARVER

As he takes a deep breath.

FARVER

Hatch, give me a sun fix. I'll need a heading to Idlewild from our last known position. If we can't raise anybody, we'll have to go down and establish visual contact.

43. CLOSE SHOT CRAIG

As he turns, amazed.

CRAIG

Skipper, we can't do that! We leave this altitude and we'll land smack dab in the middle of twenty other flights.

44. CLOSE SHOT FARVER

FARVER

You got another alternative, Craig? Sooner or later we're gonna have to find a landmark or go VFR. With no radio contact we're like a deaf and dumb man. But as long as we stay up here we're also blind.

45. MED. LONG SHOT

ACROSS THE COCKPIT

Looking toward flight deck door as Purcell enters.

PURCELL

No damage aft, Skipper. Everybody's shook up a bit and they're curious and they're also plenty scared.

46. MED. CLOSE SHOT

FARVER

As he takes another deep breath.

FARVER

Them and me.

(he reaches for a hand mike)

Ours not to reason why. Ours but to do or die . . . into the valley of public relations.

(he flicks on the cabin P.A.)

Ladies and gentlemen, this is Captain Farver. I want to assure you that everything is fine.

47. INSERT CRAIG'S FACE

As he grins wryly.

48. BACK TO SCENE

FARVER

And there is no danger. We encountered a little clear air turbulence back there along with some kind of a . . . a . . . an atmospheric . . . phenomenon. There's been no damage to the aircraft.

As he speaks his eyes scan the cockpit.

49. CLOSE SHOT THE RADIO EQUIPMENT

As seen from Farver's p.o.v.



50. DIFFERENT ANGLE

FARVER

FARVER

Except for some . . . some temporary malfunction of our radio.

CUT TO:

51. PAN SHOT DOWN THE

AISLE

Of the first class cabin, past faces of the various passengers as they listen with an intensity beyond any kind of known concentration as the Captain's voice comes over the P.A.

FARVER'S VOICE

I repeat . . . there is no cause for alarm, and we'll keep you posted. If we run according to schedule we should be landing in Idlewild sometime inside of the next forty minutes.

CUT TO:

52. INT. COCKPIT CLOSE

SHOT FARVER

As he puts down the hand mike, closes his eyes, wipes his forehead, then looks up sharply.

FARVER

Purcell, what's our fuel?

PURCELL

(checking his instruments)

29,435 pounds.

53. DIFFERENT ANGLE

FARVER

FARVER

With that Loran out, I don't know what our ground speed is, but I've got a hunch we've left that tail wind. I don't have that feeling of speed anymore.

(then over his shoulder)

Magellan, how about that heading to Idlewild?

54. CLOSE SHOT HATCH

Who takes a deep breath.

HATCH

Part of this is scientific, Skipper . . . part of it's Kentucky windage. Try two-six-two . . . that's as close as I can make it.

55. PAN SHOT AROUND THE SILENT FACES AGAIN

As they look toward the Captain, and there is utter silence save for the whistling of the jet engines outside.

56. DIFFERENT ANGLE

FARVER

As he too takes a deep breath.

FARVER

All right, gentlemen, you know what we're up against. We have no radios. We're apparently out of touch with all ground radar points. We don't know where we are. We don't even know if we're

on airways. This beast gulps fuel . . . you know that only too well. We've got one chance. Go down through this overcast and look for something familiar. It's very possible . . . not to say probable . . . we may hit something on the way down. But we've got to take that chance. I just wanted you to know where we stand. Now everyone keep a sharp lookout for other traffic . . . keep your fingers crossed . . .

He reaches over and flicks a button.

**57. CLOSE SHOT INSERT
SEAT BELT SIGN
GOING ON**

58. BACK TO SCENE

FARVER

I don't think a few prayers would be out of order either. All right, Craig . . . we're going down!

CUT TO:

59. FILM CLIP 707

As it banks and starts to descend through the overcast.

60-64. SERIES OF CUTS

From film clip to the interior of the cabin, of the faces of the men as they peer out through the window.

**65. INT. COCKPIT DAY
FULL SHOT THE AREA**

Hatch scrambles out of the astrodome and stares from face to face. Craig at this moment turns from checking out his side of the cockpit with a totally disbelieving expression.

CRAIG

Skipper—

FARVER

(shaking his head, in a soft voice)
I don't get it.

HATCH

It happens to be a fact, though. That's Manhattan Island down there.

PURCELL

(who's left his seat and is staring

over Craig's shoulder)

Manhattan Island?

(looking around, in a strained voice)

How could it be Manhattan Island? Where's the skyline? Where are the buildings?

FARVER

I don't know where they are, but we're over New York City. There's only one small item that's a little amiss here . . .

At this moment Jane enters from the galley and stares at the faces.

JANE

The passengers are—

PURCELL

I don't blame them.

JANE

We're over land, but I don't see any—

FARVER

(turns in his seat and stares directly across at her)

Any what, Janie? Any city—right? We don't either.

(he jerks his head toward the windshield)

That's Manhattan Island down there. There's the East River and the Hudson River. There's Montauk Point and every other topographical clue we need.

(a pause as he looks around at the faces)

The problem is, Janie . . . the real estate's there. It's just the city and eight million people who seem to be missing. In short . . . there isn't any New York. It's disappeared!

66. CLOSE SHOT CRAIG

As his eyes go wide and he grabs Farver's arm.

CRAIG

Skipper . . . verify something for me, would you? And in a hurry? Look!

At this moment both Purcell and Hatch leave their seats to stand over the shoulders of the pilot and co-pilot.

HATCH

It's not possible!

PURCELL Now do you have us in
What in the name of
everything holy is going on?

The CAMERA STARTS a fast pan over the instruments, shooting out toward the wing.

DISSOLVE TO:

**67. EXT. SKY AND A PAN
DOWN THROUGH THE
CLOUDS**

Until we're shooting ground level through trees and overgrowth. Overhead the 707 streaks by and as the CAMERA MOVES TO THE RIGHT we see a giant prehistoric animal grazing off a top limb of a tree.

FADE TO BLACK:

END ACT ONE

FADE ON:

**68. INT. FIRST CLASS CABIN
MOVING SHOT JANE**

As she walks with slow, desperate nonchalance down the aisle smiling left and right, reacting to the nervous, tense glances of the passengers with a wink or a whispered nod of encouragement. The CAMERA MOVES WITH HER until she reaches the galley then she stops, closes her eyes, wipes her face and leans against a bulkhead for support. Paula, rising from the lounge, walks across to her.

PAULA

(in a hushed voice)

What's the score? We've been circling for five minutes now.

JANE

(with a nod toward the cockpit)

They said they'd keep in touch. Not to come in.

Both stewardesses stare toward the flight deck door.

DISSOLVE THRU TO:

69. COCKPIT

Each man is at his place and each occasionally looks toward Farver with a side glance.

CRAIG

What do you think, Skipper?

43. CLOSE SHOT CRASH WOUND

As he turns, amazed profile shot of Farver at the instruments.

FARVER

We'll we've flown over what should be Schenectady, Albany, and points north.

(he shakes his head and wets his lips)

I'll give you a surmise, gentlemen. You may want to truss me up with ropes, but it's the only single explanation I can come up with. Somehow... in some way... we not only went through the speed of sound —

(he looks from face to face)

We've gone back in time.

70-73. SERIES OF REACTION SHOTS OF THE OTHER CREW MEMBERS

74. MED. CLOSE SHOT CRAIG

CRAIG

(softly)

What do we do about it, Skipper?

75. CLOSE SHOT PURCELL

PURCELL

Skipper, fuel is nineteen thousand pounds.

76. CLOSE SHOT FARVER

As he scans his instruments grimly.

FARVER

Then here's what we do about it. We rev this baby up until she's going as fast as she can. We'll climb until we hit that jet stream and then... then we try to go back where we came from. All right, Craig... let's do it!

CUT TO:

77. FILM CLIP 707

Climbing and picking up speed.

DISSOLVE TO:

78. INT. COCKPIT

As Purcell hunches over the Loran and reads off the airspeed. SUPER OVER THIS an exterior shot of the 707 as it accelerates.

PURCELL

700 knots. 780 knots. 800 knots. 900 knots.

(he looks up excitedly)

Skipper, I think we're going to make it!

CLEAR SUPER

79. EXTREMELY TIGHT CLOSE SHOT FARVER'S HAND

As he pushes the speed upward on the throttle.

80. CLOSE SHOT LORAN

As the arrow keeps edging forward past the numbers on the dial.

81. CLOSE SHOT FARVER

Sweat pours down his face.

FARVER

We're picking it up again. Feel it? We're picking it up again.

82-85. SERIES OF CUTS FROM FACE TO FACE

86. ANGLE SHOT LOOKING DOWN FROM THE TOP OF COCKPIT

Toward the crew as suddenly once again there's the blinding white light. The plane shudders and lurches, then the CAMERA MOVES DOWN so that it's shooting toward the faces of the two pilots. Behind them we see the other crew members as they look at one another and behind them the flight deck door opens and Jane enters, her face stricken.

JANE

Look, I know you've got your hands full... but somebody get on the pipe. I've got at least three people close to hysteria and —

CUT TO:

87. CLOSE SHOT CRAIG

As his eyes go wide.

CRAIG

Skipper, we made it. We're back!
Look!

CUT TO:

88. SHOT THROUGH WINDOW OFF THE WING

Down below is the skyline of New York, its tall spires shooting up to the sky.

89. REVERSE ANGLE LOOKING THROUGH WINDSHIELD

Into the cockpit as the faces of the crew members take on a look of total relief.

CUT TO:

90. INT. FIRST CLASS CABIN

As suddenly the loud speaker comes on. PAN SHOT AROUND THE FACES OF THE PASSENGERS during ensuing announcement.

FARVER'S VOICE

Ladies and gentlemen, this is Captain Farver. We had some momentary difficulty back there, but as you can see we're now over New York and we should be landing in just a few minutes. Thank you.

There's a click as the loud speaker goes off and the passengers show vast relief and smile back and forth among another.

CUT TO:

91. TWO SHOT JANE AND PAULA IN THE GALLEY

As Paula closes her eyes and leans against Jane in relief.

CUT TO:

92. INT. COCKPIT FULL SHOT THE AREA

FARVER

(over his shoulder to Wyatt)

How about Idlewild?

93. CLOSE SHOT WYATT

Fiddling with radio.

WYATT

Nothing doing. Our VFR is still out.

FARVER

Maybe Idlewild's is too. Try using high frequency.

WYATT

I did already, Skipper. Nothing from Idlewild.

FARVER

How about LaGuardia? Keep using high frequency. Somebody should hear us.



94. DIFFERENT ANGLE WYATT

WYATT
(into mike)

LaGuardia, this is Trans-Ocean 33. LaGuardia, Trans-Ocean 33.

Suddenly he gives out with a big, broad smile as suddenly from the radio the metallic voice of the control tower is heard.

VOICE

This is LaGuardia Tower, who is calling please?

95. PAN SHOT AROUND THE CABIN

As each crew member cheers, claps and they slap each other on the back. Wyatt holds up his hand for silence then goes back onto the mike.

WYATT

This is Trans-Ocean 33, LaGuardia. We're on the northeast leg of the LaGuardia range and both our ILS and VOR appear inoperative. Request radar vector to Idlewild ILS.

VOICE

What are you, a wise guy? You'd like what?

WYATT

(sobering considerably)

A radar vector to Idlewild ILS.

VOICE

What flight did you say this was?

WYATT

(very tense)

Trans-Ocean 33. Come on, LaGuardia, quit fooling around. We're low on fuel.

VOICE

Trans-Ocean Airlines? What kind of aircraft is this?

WYATT

This is Trans-Ocean 33. A Boeing 707 and we...

VOICE

(interrupting)

Did you say a Boeing 247?

96. DIFFERENT ANGLE FARVER

As he, exasperated, plugs in his own mike.

FARVER

Lemme handle it! LaGuardia, this is a Boeing 707, don't give us any of this 2-4-7 jazz. You're only about twenty years behind the times. This is a 707, LaGuardia. A jet. Four big, lovely Pratt Whitney turbines, only they're getting hungry. We're low on fuel and all we want is a radar vector to

Idlewild. Now do you have us in radar contact or don't you?

VOICE

(after a pause)

I don't know who you guys are, but we don't know anything at all about radar or jets or anything else. But if you're really low on fuel, we'll clear you to land here.

97. PAN SHOT OVER TO CRAIG

Who's consulting an approach chart. He leans over to Farver.

CRAIG

Captain, their longest runway is less than five thousand feet. Should we take a chance?

VOICE

Trans-Ocean 33, you're cleared to land on Runway 22. Altimeter two-nine-eight-eight, wind southward 10 miles per hour. The captain is to report to the CAA office immediately after landing.

FARVER

(into mike)

Roger. We'll stay in touch.

(he takes out the plug then suddenly looks off into space, turns to the others)

CAA? Why they haven't called the Federal Aviation Agency CAA in—

(then he turns to Craig)

We'll bring her down. It'll be like landing in a phone booth, but...

Hatch, who is standing up between his seat and the two pilot's chairs, suddenly points out the window. His eyes bug.

HATCH

Captain, circle again, will you?

(a pause)

And then look!

CUT TO:

98. FILM CLIP OF 707

Banking in a turn then leveling off.

CUT TO:

99. INT. COCKPIT

As the entire crew is looking out

toward the left wing. ZOOMAR INTO THE THEIR FACES as they react in numb shock.

**100. REVERSE ANGLE
LOOKING TOWARD THE
LEFT WINDSHIELD**

CUT TO:

**101. AERIAL SHOT NEW YORK
WORLD'S FAIR**

The trylon and perisphere focal in the shot.

CUT TO:

102. INT. COCKPIT

As a dead silence descends. Craig gulps.

CRAIG

Skipper . . . do you know what that is? Do you know what —

FARVER

(hunches forward in his seat for a moment, then looks up)

I know exactly what it is.

(he looks around at the others)

That's the New York World's Fair.

WYATT

The New York World's Fair? But that means we're in —

HATCH

1939. We came back . . . we came back . . . but dear God . . . we didn't come back far enough.

**103. PAN SHOT AROUND THE
FACES OF THE CREW**

Farver bites his lips, his fingers drum on the seat sides as his mind works and then he looks up again.

FARVER

We can't land.

(he shakes his head)

We can't land in LaGuardia . . . and we can't land back in 1939.

We've got to try again.

There's a silence amongst the crew and finally —

CRAIG

(with a nod toward flight deck door)

What about the passengers?

104. CLOSE SHOT FARVER

As he takes a deep breath.



FARVER

I think we'd better let them in on it.

(he flicks on the P.A. system)

Ladies and gentlemen, this is your captain. What I'm about to tell you . . . what I'm about to tell you is something I can't explain. Your crew is as much in the dark as you are. But if you look out on the left hand side of this aircraft . . . you'll see directly below us an area called Lake Success. And those buildings down there aren't the United Nations. They happen to be . . . they happen to be the World's Fair.

**105. PAN SHOT DOWN THE
CABIN OF THE PLANE**

Past each loud speaker as the Captain's voice is heard on all of them.

FARVER'S VOICE

What I'm trying to tell you is that somehow, some way . . . in some manner . . . this aircraft has gone back into time and it's 1939. We're going to try to increase our speed and go through the same sound barrier we've already done twice before. I don't know if we can do it. All I ask you is that

you remain calm . . . and pray!

CUT TO:

106. EXT. FILM CLIP 707

As once again it climbs through the overcast seeking altitude.

107. DIFFERENT ANGLE OF IT

As it speeds away from the camera. Over this we hear Serling's voice.

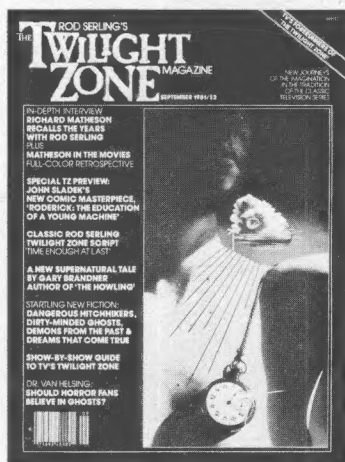
SERLING'S VOICE

A Trans-Ocean jet airliner en route from London to New York on an uneventful June afternoon in the year 1961, but now reported overdue and missing and by now searched for on land, sea and air by anguished human beings fearful of what they'll find. But you and I know where she is. You and I know what's happened, so if some moment . . . any moment . . . you hear the sound of jet engines flying atop the overcast, engines that sound searching and lost, engines that sound desperate . . . shoot up a flare or do something . . . that would be Trans-Ocean 33, trying to get home . . . from the Twilight Zone.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END **17**

In September's TZ...



HE IS LEGEND: Television shows such as *The Twilight Zone*, *Thriller*, and *Star Trek*; books such as *I Am Legend*, *The Shrinking Man*, the *Shock* series, and *Hell House*; films such as *Duel*, *The Night Stalker*, *Somewhere in Time*, the Poe adaptations, and the forthcoming *Jaws III* — what all these have in common is the incredible writing talent of **Richard Matheson**, a major force in modern-day horror, fantasy, and suspense — and the subject of next month's bonus-length TZ Interview. It's followed by a full-color overview of Matheson's movie work, courtesy our favorite Fangorian, **Robert Martin**.

HE, ROBOT: In September, TZ readers will also get an advance look at **John Sladek's** comic masterpiece, *Roderick, or The Education of a Young Machine*. Already nominated for Britain's National Book Award, and displaying a wit reminiscent of Pynchon, Barth, and Heller, *Roderick* offers a satiric view of contemporary America as seen through the unblinking eyes of a pint-sized but precocious young robot. It's sure to be one of the most talked-about novels of the eighties — and in our novelette-size excerpt, *Roderick Goes to School*, we bring you some of its most memorable scenes.

MORE NEW FICTION: In a tale solidly in the *Twilight Zone* tradition, **Gary Brandner**, author of *The Howling*, turns from lone wolves to a most unusual machine known as *The Loaner*.

• The place is Paris, the year 1806. A young clerk at the American Embassy has become embroiled in an *affaire d'honneur* with an arrogant English lord; tomorrow morning the two of them will fight a duel to the death. But tonight the American is haunted by images of the future. He babbles of Pickett's charge at Gettysburg, and of bombing raids of Ploesti. . . In *Stroke of Mercy*, by *Firelord* author **Parke Godwin**, you'll see, in full, the young man's searing vision — and learn who he really is.

• Australian writer **Jack Wodhams** offers visions of a different sort in *Premonition*, a tale of terror and mounting obsession in which a man is warned, while dreaming, of the imminent death of his mother — a mother halfway round the world.

• *Matinee at the Flame*, by Maine writer **Christopher Fahy**, takes us to a seedy old burlesque hall where Fate plays m.c. to the strippers and *you're* the featured comic.

• The Mojave Desert forms the setting of *Chameleon Junction* by **Hal Hill**, in which an all-American good old boy encounters a rather strange hitchhiker who may be just a hippie — or may be something not entirely human.

• In **John Alfred Taylor's** *When the Cat's Away*, a modern-day classical scholar finds himself caught up in the most ancient — and deadly — of sacrificial rites.

MORE NEW FEATURES: Relive the early days of television in **Allan Asherman's** *Forerunners of The Twilight Zone*, an illustrated guide to such now-legendary programs as *Lights Out*, *Tales of Tomorrow*, *One Step Beyond*, and *Science Fiction Theatre*.

• Relive *The Twilight Zone's* early days in *Time Enough at Last*, **Rod Serling's** story of a myopic, henpecked little bank teller (played by Burgess Meredith) who wants simply to be left alone with his books — and ends up getting more than he wished for. It's next-month's TZ Classic, brought to you uncut and complete with stills from the original show.

• Our own **Dr. Van Helsing** examines one of supernatural literature's most hotly debated issues: Should a good ghost-story writer actually believe in ghosts? Should a reader?

• **Theodore Sturgeon** provides a veteran's view of fantasy in print; **Gahan Wilson** casts a jaundiced eye at fantasy on screen; and **Marc Scott Zicree** covers such memorable episodes as "The Invaders" and "The Whole Truth" in his *Show-by-Show Guide to TV's Twilight Zone*.

All this, and more, coming to you next month for a paltry two dollars in September's TZ.